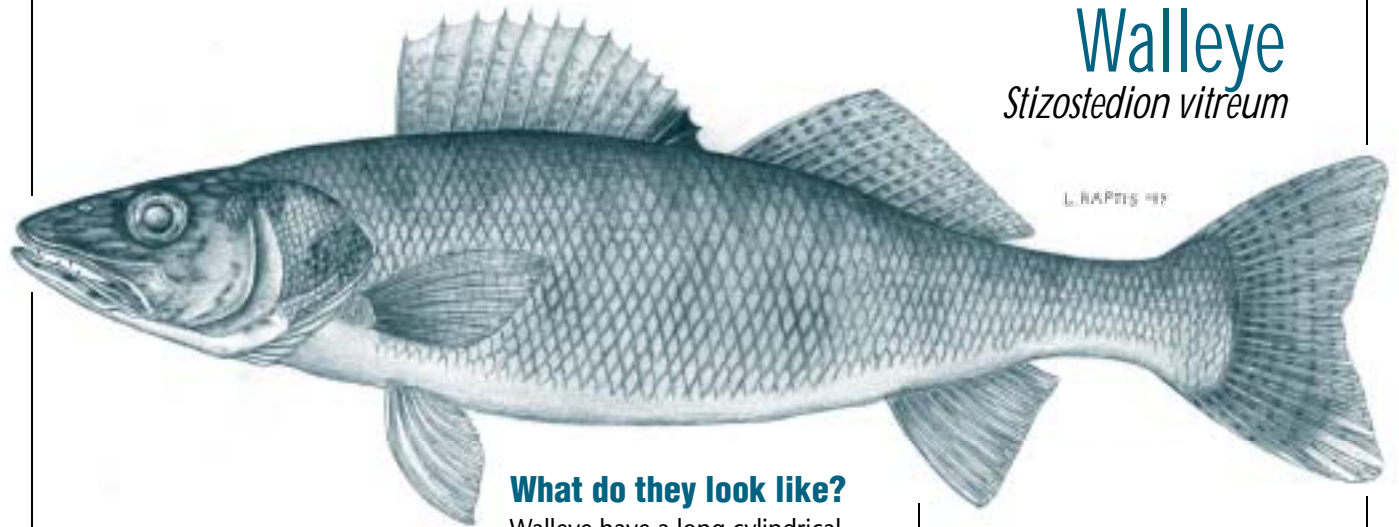


B.C. Fish facts



Walleye
Stizostedion vitreum

Other common names:

Pike-perch, pickerel

Typical range in length for adults: 30-50 cm

Maximum length: 70 cm

Typical range in weight for adults: 0.5-1 kg

Maximum weight: 5 kg

What do they look like?

Walleye have a long cylindrical body and a long conical head that makes up about 1/4 of the total length. The large mouth has teeth in bands, with long sharp canines on the jaws and roof of the mouth. The cornea of the eye is slightly milky looking, giving the "walleye" its name. There are two fins on its back (dorsal fins). The base of the second dorsal fin is longer than the base of the first. The first dorsal fin is heavily spined and it has a large black spot at the base of the last dorsal spine. The anal fin (the single fin on its lower surface nearest the tail) has 2 spines. The gill cover also has one or more spines. Walleye are a dark olive-colour, mottled with brassy specks. The belly is white. The white patch on the lower tip of the tail fin is more visible on males. Females are, on average, larger than males. Young walleye have dark blotches on their sides.

Where do they live?

A fish of cool lakes and rivers, walleye are found from Labrador to Alabama, west to Nebraska, and north to the mouth of the Mackenzie River. In B.C., native populations of walleye are scattered throughout the Peace and Liard systems. A population that was illegally introduced in the Roosevelt Reservoir, in Washington, has invaded the Columbia River in B.C. They continue to spread upstream and appear to have successfully passed the boat lock at Keenleyside, near Castlegar. This spread of walleye to areas that historically never had walleye is causing concerns about the conservation of native species in the Columbia River system.

What do they eat?

Walleye are predators, eating mostly small fish and other organisms such as amphipods, mayfly nymphs, and other aquatic insects. They utilize any species of fish available to them, and can be cannibalistic if other forage fish are not readily available.

What is their life cycle like?

Walleye spawn over shallow gravelly areas in tributary streams or on the shoals of lakes soon after the ice goes out. Males migrate first to the spawning grounds. One or more smaller males often accompany each female during spawning. Vigorous milling about and splashing sometimes occurs. A female deposits from 35,000 to 600,000 small eggs (about 2 mm diameter) in one night of spawning, then leaves the area. Eggs are laid mostly in late evening. Hatching usually occurs from 12 to 18 days after spawning, but may take longer depending on water temperatures. Ten to 15 days after hatching, the young disperse into the upper levels of open water. By the latter

part of the summer, young-of-the-year have moved into deeper water. Growth is faster in the warmer, southern parts of its range than in the north. Males mature at 2 to 4 years and females at 3 to 6 years.

How are they doing?

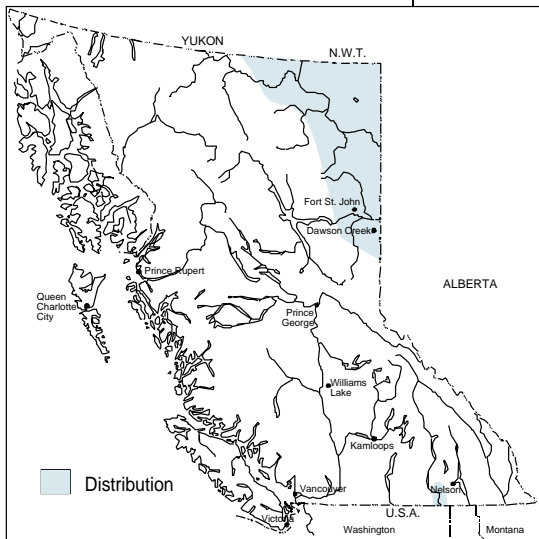
Walleye is a yellow-listed species, which means it is not at risk in British Columbia.

How you can help:

- Never transport live fish or other organisms from one body of water to another. This could transfer diseases and parasites from one ecosystem to another, or upset the natural balance in the ecosystem where they are released.
- Be aware that what you dump down the sink or into your septic tank, roadside storm drains or sewers may find its way into streams or lakes. Help keep water quality high by using detergents and soaps minimally and by not dumping harsh chemicals, such as bleach, paint thinners or antifreeze, into drains.

No kidding!

- Walleye in colder waters grow very slowly and tend to live a lot longer.
- Active swimmers, walleye are capable of travelling considerable distances.
- The "milky" eye of this species is an adaptation to feeding at night or in low light conditions. Walleye avoid bright light and are generally not caught during bright days in clear water.
- Walleye are attractive to anglers, as they are excellent eating, although they are not taken in great numbers in British Columbia due to their limited distribution.
- It is believed that walleye moved north from the upper Mississippi system following deglaciation.



- Form a group of water stewards and volunteers to monitor local water quality.
- Obey angling regulations and habitat protection bylaws, guidelines and regulations, since they are designed to protect fish and their habitat. You should also Observe, Record and Report violations of the regulations by phoning 1-800-663-9653.

