



FISHES OF LAKE RIPLEY

Based on inventory data collected since the mid-1970s, a total of 39 different species of fish have been documented in Lake Ripley. Each species is described below, with most descriptions borrowed from the Fish of Wisconsin Field Guide.¹ Fish illustrations are mostly borrowed from <http://pond.dnr.cornell.edu> and are not to scale. The fish are grouped by family.

Bass

<u>Common Name:</u>	White bass	
<u>Scientific Name:</u>	<i>Morone chrysops</i>	
<u>Family:</u>	Temperate bass (<i>Moronidae</i>)	
<u>U.S. Nativity:</u>	Native	
<u>Habitat:</u>	Large lakes, rivers and impoundments with relatively clear water; fish school in large groups near the surface	
<u>Food:</u>	Small fish	
<u>Reproduction:</u>	Spawns in late spring to early summer at water temperatures of 55-79°F, and in open water over gravel beds or rubble 6-10 feet deep	
<u>Average Size:</u>	18 inches	

Bowfin

<u>Common Name:</u>	Bowfin	
<u>Scientific Name:</u>	<i>Amia calva</i>	
<u>Family:</u>	Bowfin (<i>Amiidae</i>)	
<u>U.S. Nativity:</u>	Native	
<u>Habitat:</u>	Deep waters associated with plant beds in warm-water lakes and rivers; an air breather that can survive in oxygen-depleted waters	
<u>Food:</u>	A voracious predator that prowls shallow plant beds for fish and crayfish. Once thought harmful to game fish, it is now considered an asset in controlling rough fish and stunted game fish populations	
<u>Reproduction:</u>	When water warms past 61 degrees in spring, male removes vegetation on sand or gravel bottom; one or more females deposit up to 5,000 eggs in nest; male guards until young reach about 4 inches in length	
<u>Average Size:</u>	12 to 24 inches	

Catfish

<u>Common Name:</u>	Black bullhead	
<u>Scientific Name:</u>	<i>Ameiurus melas</i>	

¹ Bosanko, Dave. 2007. Fish of Wisconsin Field Guide. Adventure Publications, Inc. Cambridge, MN.

Family: Catfish (*Ictaluridae*)
U.S. Nativity: Native
Habitat: Prefers shallow, slow-moving streams and backwaters; lakes and ponds; tolerates extremely turbid (murky) and low-oxygen conditions
Food: A scavenging opportunist that feeds mostly on animal material (living or dead), but will also eat plant matter; stirs up the lake bottom and uproots vegetation in search of food
Reproduction: Spawns between April and July when water temperatures reach 70-77°F; builds nest in shallow water with a muddy bottom
Average Size: 8-10 inches

Common Name: **Yellow bullhead**
Scientific Name: *Ameiurus natalis*
Family: Catfish (*Ictaluridae*)
U.S. Nativity: Native
Habitat: Warm, vegetated lakes and sluggish streams
Food: A scavenging opportunist; feeds on insects, crayfish, snails, small fish and plant material; locates food by following chemical trails through the water
Reproduction: Spawns late spring to early summer; males and females build nests in shallow water with some vegetation and a soft bottom; less likely than other bullheads to overpopulate a lake and become stunted
Average Size: 8-10 inches



Cods

Common Name: **Burbot**
Scientific Name: *Lota lota*
Family: Cods (*Gadidae*)
U.S. Nativity: Native
Habitat: Deep, cold and clear lakes and streams of the north
Food: A voracious predator; primarily feeds on small fish but will attempt to eat virtually anything, including fish eggs, clams and crayfish
Reproduction: Spawns in mid to late winter, under the ice, over sand or gravel bottoms, usually in less than 15 feet of water
Average Size: 20 inches



Gar

Common Name: **Longnose gar**
Scientific Name: *Lepisosteus osseus*
Family: Gar (*Lepisosteidae*)
U.S. Nativity: Native
Habitat: Floodplain lakes and backwaters of large rivers; can breathe air at the



surface through a modified swim bladder, allowing it to survive in hot, oxygen-poor shallows; prefers warm, deep water but will school near the surface

Food: Minnows and small fish; an efficient predator that controls rough fish populations

Reproduction: Spawns in weedy shallows of lakes or tributaries when water temperatures reach the high 60s

Average Size: 24-36 inches

Killifish

Common Name: **Banded killifish**

Scientific Name: ***Fundulus diaphanous***



Family: Killifish (*Cyprinodontidae*)

U.S. Nativity: Native

Habitat: Prefer the quieter portions of still water and slower-moving areas of streams; may dig into sandy or fine-gravel bottoms when threatened

Food: Killifish feed at the surface, mid-water and near the bottom on midge larvae and insects. The larger fish consume insects, mollusks and worms

Reproduction: Spawns in water of about 70°F

Average Size: 2-4 inches

Minnows

Common Name: **Blackchin shiner**

Scientific Name: ***Notropis heterodon***

Family: Minnow (*Cyprinidae*)

U.S. Nativity: Native

Habitat:



Found in cool, clear, and shallow sections of lakes and slow regions of streams with dense vegetation, very little siltation, and a sandy substrate; appears to be intolerant of silt and salt, and is becoming uncommon over much of its range; an indicator of good water quality

Food: Feeds on a variety of prey, half of which is from open water and the other half from vegetation, the lake surface, and the bottom; may feed on cladocerans and flying midges taken from the surface of the water

Reproduction: Spawn from May to the end of July

Average Size: 2-3 inches

Common Name: **Blacknose shiner**

Scientific Name: ***Notropis heterolepis***

Family: Minnow (*Cyprinidae*)

U.S. Nativity: Native



Habitat: Lives in small creeks and in the weedy shallows of lakes and ponds; becoming rare in many parts of its range due to loss of habitat and deteriorating water quality; requires clean, cool, well-oxygenated streams and lakes with abundant aquatic vegetation; intolerant of turbid water and pollution

Food: Small aquatic insects, crustaceans, midge larvae and algae; Feeds primarily along the bottom, and small individuals feed on vegetation

Reproduction: Spawns in early summer

Average Size: 2.5 inches

Common Name: **Bluntnose minnow**
Scientific Name: ***Pimephales notatus***
Family: Minnow (*Cyprinidae*)
U.S. Nativity: Native
Habitat:



Utilizes and tolerates a wide variety of habitat conditions; found in every water body capable of supporting fish life and thrive in turbid, nutrient rich waters; equally at home in small streams to the largest rivers and lakes; can become abundant in disturbed habitats when the numbers of competitor species more sensitive to increased turbidities, siltation of instream substrates, or increased water temperatures decline

Food: Algae, insect larvae, diatoms, small crustaceans, and rarely fish eggs or small fish

Reproduction: Spawns spring to late summer

Average Size: 1.5-3.5 inches

Common Name: **Central mudminnow**
Scientific Name: ***Umbra limi***
Family: Mud minnow (*Umbridae*)
U.S. Nativity: Native
Habitat:



Prefer cool bogs and marshes, vegetated ponds and ditches, and small, slow-moving streams that have soft bottoms (but not deep silt); can breathe air and may adapt to periods of low water by “burrowing” into soft sediments

Food: A bottom feeder that preys on small snails and clams, copepods, water fleas, insect larvae, and even other small fish

Reproduction: Spawns in the spring when water temperatures are 50-59° F, usually in flooded areas where there is plenty of vegetation

Average Size: 3 inches

Common Name: **Common carp**
Scientific Name: ***Cyprinus carpio***
Family: Minnow (*Cyprinidae*)
U.S. Nativity: Non-native



Habitat: Warm, shallow, quiet and well-vegetated waters of both streams and lakes
Food: Prefers insects, crustaceans and mollusks, but sometimes eats algae and other plants; stirs up the lake bottom and uproots plants in search of food
Reproduction: Spawns from late spring to early summer in very shallow water at stream and lake edges
Average Size: 16-18 inches

Common Name: **Common shiner**
Scientific Name: *Luxilus cornutus*
Family: Minnow (*Cyprinidae*)
U.S. Nativity: Native
Habitat: Lakes, rivers and streams
Food: Small insects, algae and zooplankton
Reproduction: Spawning begins in late May; males prepares a nest of small stones and gravel at the head of a stream riffle
Average Size: 4-12 inches



Common Name: **Emerald shiner**
Scientific Name: *Notropis atherinoides*
Family: Minnow (*Cyprinidae*)
U.S. Nativity: Native
Habitat: A mid-water or near-surface species that usually lives in large- or moderate-sized schools; found near the surface at night and retreats to deeper water during the day; does not appear to use or have any preference for a particular type of substrate; avoids areas with dense vegetation
Food: Zooplankton, insects, insect larvae, small fish
Reproduction: Spawns in the late spring or early summer, sometimes as late as mid-August, when water temperatures are around 75°F
Average Size: 2.5-4 inches



Common Name: **Fathead minnow**
Scientific Name: *Pimephales promelas*
Family: Minnow (*Cyprinidae*)
U.S. Nativity: Native
Habitat: Streams, ponds and lakes, particularly shallow, vegetated or turbid areas lacking predators; a hardy species that can tolerate low oxygen levels
Food: Primarily herbivorous, but will eat insects and copepods
Reproduction: Spawns in spring through August when water temperatures reach 60°F; male prepares nest under sticks and rocks
Average Size: 3-4 inches



Common Name: **Golden shiner**



Scientific Name: ***Notemigonus crysoleucas***
Family: Minnow (*Cyprinidae*)
U.S. Nativity: Native
Habitat: Prefers quiet, clear waters of lakes, ponds, sloughs and ditches; infrequently found in the quietest parts of rivers; often found near dense mats of vegetation; can tolerate pollution, turbidity, low oxygen and very warm water temperatures
Food: Zooplankton, insects, crustaceans, plants and algae
Reproduction: Spawns in the spring when water temperatures reach about 70°F and ceases when temperatures exceed 80°F
Average Size: 3-5 inches

Common Name: **Pugnose shiner**
Scientific Name: ***Notropis anogenus***
Family: Minnow (*Cyprinidae*)
U.S. Nativity: Native
Habitat: An increasingly rare species that prefers clear, vegetated shoals of glacial lakes and streams of low gradient over sand, mud, gravel or marl; extremely intolerant to turbidity (muddy water), siltation, and vegetation removal
Food: Grazes on plants, consuming filamentous algae and cladocerans
Reproduction: Spawns mid-June through mid-July
Average Size: 1-1.5 inches



Perch

Common Name: **Fantail darter**
Scientific Name: ***Etheostoma flabellare***
Family: Perch (*Percidae*)
U.S. Nativity: Native
Habitat: Riffle areas of streams where there are cobbles and gravel; can tolerate low oxygen levels for short periods
Food: Midge larvae, isopods, amphipods and other aquatic insects
Reproduction: Spawns late April to mid-June when water temperatures reach 60°F
Average Size: 2 inches



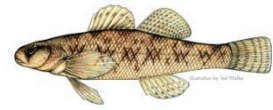
Common Name: **Iowa darter**
Scientific Name: ***Etheostoma exile***
Family: Perch (*Percidae*)
U.S. Nativity: Native
Habitat: Prefers cool, clear to slightly turbid (cloudy), slow-moving vegetated brooks and vegetated portions of glacial lakes, marshes and ponds
Food: Copepods, water fleas and midge larvae



Reproduction: Spawns late April to early June in shallow water among submerged vegetation
Average Size: 2 inches

Common Name: **Johnny darter**
Scientific Name: ***Etheostoma nigrum***
Family: Perch (*Percidae*)

U.S. Nativity: Native
Habitat: Found in most rivers, streams and lakes
Food: Water fleas, insect larvae
Reproduction: Spawns in May and June; males migrate to shorelines to establish breeding areas
Average Size: 2-4 inches



Common Name: **Least darter**
Scientific Name: ***Etheostoma microperca***
Family: Perch (*Percidae*)

U.S. Nativity: Native
Habitat: Found in clear, quiet and well-vegetated lakes, headwaters, pools, creeks and streams
Food: Midge larvae, small crustaceans
Reproduction: Spawns starting in late April when water temperatures reach 56-60°F
Average Size: 1-1.5 inches



Common Name: **Walleye**
Scientific Name: ***Stizostedion/Sander vitreus***
Family: Perch (*Percidae*)

U.S. Nativity: Native
Habitat: Clear to fertile lakes and streams; abundant in very large lakes and rivers; prefers cooler water
Food: Mainly small fish, but also eats insects, crayfish, leeches and other small prey as opportunity permits; a nocturnal feeder that can feed in low-light conditions

Reproduction: Spawns between mid-April and early May in tributary streams, flooded wetlands, or rocky lake shoals when water temperatures reach 45-50°F
Average Size: 14-17 inches



Common Name: **Yellow perch**
Scientific Name: ***Perca flavescens***
Family: Perch (*Percidae*)

U.S. Nativity: Native
Habitat: Found in most glacial lakes, ponds and streams; prefers clear and fertile



Food:
Reproduction:

water with moderate vegetation, but can adapt to a variety of conditions, including turbidity and a wide temperature range; can survive low oxygen
Small fish, insects, zooplankton, snails, leeches and crayfish
Spawns at night in shallow, vegetated areas after ice-out when water warms
to 44-52°F; can become stunted in smaller inland lakes where top predators are overfished or due to over-competition for food
7-10 inches

Pike

Common Name:
Scientific Name:
Family:
U.S. Nativity:
Habitat:

Grass pickerel
Esox americanus vermiculatus
Pike (*Esocidae*)
Native



Food:
Reproduction:

Most common in clear waters with an abundance of dense aquatic vegetation; found in slow moving streams, permanent wetlands, and natural lakes; intolerant of turbidity (muddy water) and areas that have been extensively channelized or ditched for drainage purposes
Primarily eats fish, but also crayfish, frogs and insect larvae
Spawns in the spring when water temperatures range from 43 to 53°F; will migrate upstream, sometimes long distances, in search of shallow backwaters with dense vegetation

Average Size:

6-10 inches

Common Name:
Scientific Name:
Family:
U.S. Nativity:
Habitat:

Northern pike
Esox lucius
Pike (*Esocidae*)
Native



Food:
Reproduction:

Lakes, ponds, streams and rivers; often found near plants; small pike tolerate water temperatures up to 70°F, but larger fish prefer cooler water, 55°F or less

Average Size:

Small fish, crayfish, and occasionally frogs
Spawns in late March or early April in shallow tributaries and marshes at 34-40°F water temperatures

18-24 inches

Silversides

Common Name:
Scientific Name:
Family:
U.S. Nativity:
Habitat:
Food:

Brook silverside
Labidesthes sicculus
Silversides (*Atheridae*)
Native
Surface of clear lakes and large streams
Aquatic and flying insects, spiders



Reproduction: Spawns in late spring and early summer in aquatic vegetation
Average Size: 3-4 inches

Stickleback

Common Name: **Brook stickleback**
Scientific Name: ***Culaea inconstans***
Family: Stickleback (*Gasterosteidae*)
U.S. Nativity: Native
Habitat: Shallows of cool streams and lakes
Food: Small aquatic animals and occasionally algae
Reproduction: Spawns in water temperatures from 50-68°F; male builds a golf ball-sized, globular nest of sticks, algae and other plant matter on submerged vegetation
Average Size: 2-4 inches




Sucker

Common Name: **Bigmouth buffalo**
Scientific Name: ***Ictiobus cyprinellus***
Family: Sucker (*Catostomidae*)
U.S. Nativity: Native
Habitat: Prefers soft-bottomed shallows of large lakes, sloughs and oxbows; slow-flowing streams and rivers
Food: Small mollusks, insect larvae, zooplankton
Reproduction: Spawns in April or May in clear, shallow water when water temperatures reach the low 60s
Average Size: 18-20 inches





Common Name: **Lake chubsucker***
Scientific Name: ***Erimyzon sucetta***
Family: Sucker (*Catostomidae*)
U.S. Nativity: Native
Habitat: Prefers clear, quiet or sluggishly flowing waters of all types; most abundant where the bottom is soft and organically rich, and in areas of dense aquatic vegetation; intolerant of turbid (murky) and silty waters
Food: Aquatic insects, fish eggs, crustaceans, algae and other plants found on the lake bottom
Reproduction: Spawns in small tributary streams from mid-May to early July when water temperatures are between 59-72°F
Average Size: 8-10 inches



<u>Common Name:</u>	White sucker	
<u>Scientific Name:</u>	<i>Catostomus commersonii</i>	
<u>Family:</u>	Sucker (<i>Catostomidae</i>)	
<u>U.S. Nativity:</u>	Native	
<u>Habitat:</u>	All permanent waterbodies that can sustain fish; widespread and tolerant of a range of water conditions	
<u>Food:</u>	Insects, crustaceans and plant matter	
<u>Reproduction:</u>	Migrates up tributaries in April and May to spawn in riffles; spawning may occur along shoreline shallows over gravel or coarse sand bottoms in larger lakes	
<u>Average Size:</u>	12-18 inches	

Sunfish

<u>Common Name:</u>	Black crappie	
<u>Scientific Name:</u>	<i>Pomoxis nigromaculatus</i>	
<u>Family:</u>	Sunfish (<i>Centrarchidae</i>)	
<u>U.S. Nativity:</u>	Native	
<u>Habitat:</u>	Prefers quiet, clear water of streams and mid-sized lakes; often associated with plant growth but may roam deep, open basins and flats, particularly during winter	
<u>Food:</u>	Small fish, aquatic insects, zooplankton	
<u>Reproduction:</u>	Spawns in shallow plant beds from May to June when water temperatures reaches the high 50s; male sweeps out circular nest, typically on fine gravel or sand; can overpopulate a lake and become stunted	
<u>Average Size:</u>	7-12 inches	

<u>Common Name:</u>	Bluegill	
<u>Scientific Name:</u>	<i>Lepomis macrochirus</i>	
<u>Family:</u>	Sunfish (<i>Centrarchidae</i>)	
<u>U.S. Nativity:</u>	Native	
<u>Habitat:</u>	Mid-size streams and most warm-water ponds, lakes and rivers with vegetated bays or shorelines; can tolerate very warm water, but are susceptible to winterkill	
<u>Food:</u>	Insects, insect larvae, small fish, fish eggs, leeches, snails, zooplankton and algae; has acute daytime vision for feeding on small prey, but sees poorly in low light	
<u>Reproduction:</u>	Spawns from late May to early August, or as soon as water temperatures approach 67°F; male excavates nest in gravel or coarse sand, often in shallow plant beds, in colony of up to 50 other nests; can overpopulate a lake and become stunted due to dense cover or the absence of top predators	
<u>Average Size:</u>	5-7 inches	

Common Name:

Green sunfish

Scientific Name:

Lepomis cyanellus

Family:

Sunfish (*Centrarchidae*)

U.S. Nativity:

Native

Habitat:

Warm, vegetated, shallow lakes and the backwaters of slow-moving streams; very tolerant of high siltation and low oxygen levels

Food:

Aquatic insects, crustaceans, small fish

Reproduction:

Spawning begins in May when water temperatures are between 60-80°F; male fans out nest on gravel bottom, often in less than one foot of water, near weeds or other cover beneath overhanging limbs; highly prolific and can overpopulate a lake and become stunted

Average Size:

5 inches



Common Name:

Largemouth bass

Scientific Name:

Micropterus salmoides

Family:

Sunfish (*Centrarchidae*)

U.S. Nativity:

Native

Habitat:

Warm, shallow, fertile, vegetated lakes and river backwaters; found in thick plant beds, shallow woody cover and around docks; not usually found in water deeper than 20 feet; susceptible to winterkill

Food:

Small fish, frogs, crayfish, insects and leeches; often feeds near the surface

Reproduction:

Spawns from late April until early July when water temperatures reach 60°F; male builds large, solitary nest in shallow water, usually on firm bottom in heavy plant cover

Average Size:

12-20 inches



Common Name:

Pumpkinseed sunfish

Scientific Name:

Lepomis gibbosus

Family:

Sunfish (*Centrarchidae*)

U.S. Nativity:

Native

Habitat:

Vegetated ponds, clear lakes, reservoirs and slow-moving streams; prefers cover, like aquatic vegetation or submerged brush, and slightly cooler water than bluegill; often schools around docks and sunken logs

Food:

Insects, insect larvae, snails, crustaceans, mollusks, small fish, leeches and small amounts of vegetation; feeds along deep weed beds during the day and settles to the bottom at night

Reproduction:

Spawns late May to August starting when water temperatures reach 55-63° F; male builds nest on gravel bottom among weeds in shallow water; can become overly abundant and stunted due to dense vegetation or lack of top predators

Average Size:

6-8 inches



Common Name:

Scientific Name:

Family:

U.S. Nativity:

Habitat:

Food:

Reproduction:

Average Size:

Rock bass

Ambloplites rupestris

Sunfish (*Centrarchidae*)

Native

Vegetation on firm to rocky bottom in clear-water lakes and medium-size streams

Prefers crayfish, but eats aquatic insects and small fish

Spawns in spring at water temperatures from high 60s to 70s; solitary nester; male fans out a nest on coarse gravel bottom in plants less than three feet deep

8-10 inches



Common Name:

Scientific Name:

Family:

U.S. Nativity:

Habitat:

Food:

Reproduction:

Average Size:

Smallmouth bass

Micropterus dolomieu

Sunfish (*Centrarchidae*)

Native

Clear, swift-flowing streams and rivers; clear lakes with gravel or rocky shorelines

Small fish, crayfish, insects and frogs

Spawns in May and June when the water temperature reaches the mid to high 60s; male sweeps out nest in gravel bed, typically in 3-10 feet of water near a log or boulder

12-20 inches



Common Name:

Scientific Name:

Family:

U.S. Nativity:

Habitat:

Food:

Reproduction:

Average Size:

White crappie

Pomoxis annularis

Sunfish (*Centrarchidae*)

Native

Slightly silty rivers, streams and mid-size lakes; prefers warmer, less vegetated, deeper and more turbid water than black crappie; usually found in open water

Aquatic insects, small fish and zooplankton; actively feeds at night and during the winter

Spawns on firm sand or gravel bottom in May and June when water temperatures are between 61-68°F; builds nest colonies in deeper water than other sunfish; can overpopulate a lake and become stunted

6-12 inches

