



SPORT FISH OF NEW MEXICO

COLD AND WARM WATER SPECIES

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NEW MEXICO DEPARTMENT OF GAME AND FISH



COLD WATER SPECIES

NEW MEXICO IS HOME TO SEVEN SPECIES OF SALMONIDS, TWO OF WHICH ARE NATIVE TO NEW MEXICO. THE FOLLOWING SALMONIDS ARE FOUND IN OUR STATE.

NATIVE SPECIES:

- RIO GRANDE CUTTHROAT TROUT
- GILA TROUT

NON-NATIVE SPECIES:

- RAINBOW TROUT
- BROWN TROUT
- BROOK TROUT
- KOKANEE SALMON
- LAKE TROUT

RIO GRANDE CUTTHROAT TROUT

NATIVE AND STATE FISH OF NEW MEXICO

- THE RIO GRANDE CUTTHROAT TROUT IS THE STATE FISH OF NEW MEXICO AND IS ONE OF TWO TROUT SPECIES NATIVE TO OUR STATE. THE RIO GRANDE CUTTHROAT TROUT IS FOUND ONLY IN NORTHERN NEW MEXICO AND SOUTHERN COLORADO. THEY ARE NAMED AFTER THE BRIGHT REDDISH COLOR AROUND THE GILL AREA.



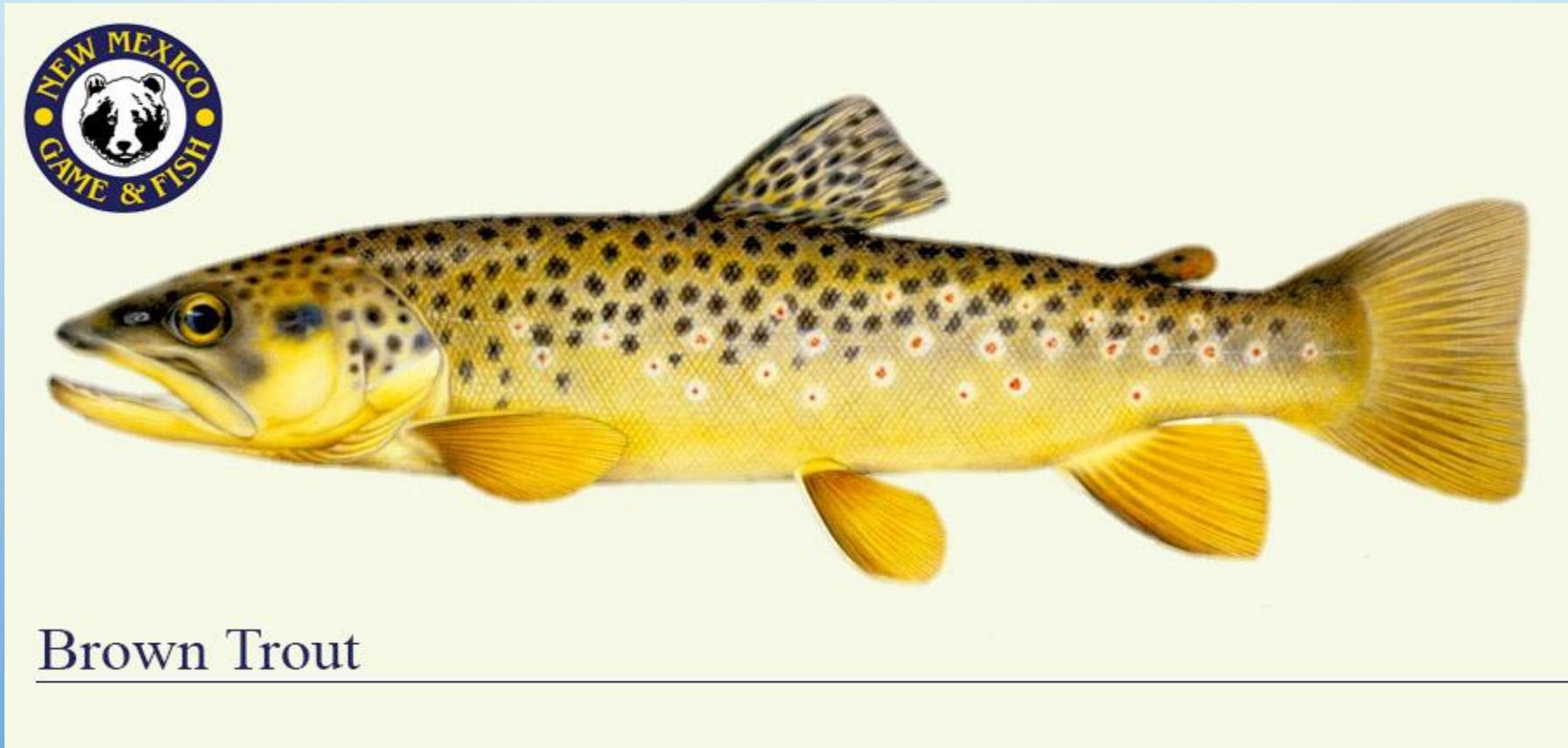
GILA TROUT NATIVE FISH

- PRONOUNCED “HEELA,” THIS TROUT IS NATIVE TO SOUTHWESTERN NEW MEXICO AND SOUTHEAST ARIZONA. THE GILA TROUT IS ONE OF THE RAREST SPECIES OF TROUT IN THE UNITED STATES, BUT THROUGH CONSERVATION EFFORTS, IT WAS REMOVED FROM THE ENDANGERED SPECIES LIST IN 2006. THEY ARE YELLOWISH-BROWN, GOLD OR COPPER IN COLOR WITH BLACK SPOTS. THE GILA TROUT IS ONE OF TWO NATIVE TROUT FOUND IN NEW MEXICO.



BROWN TROUT

- THE BROWN TROUT IS A EUROPEAN SPECIES THAT WAS BROUGHT TO NORTH AMERICA. THE NEW MEXICO DEPARTMENT OF GAME AND FISH DOES NOT STOCK BROWN TROUT, MAKING THEM TRULY A WILD FISH! BROWN TROUT ARE A BRASSY BROWN COLOR WITH MEDIUM BLACK AND RED SPOTS SURROUNDED BY WHITE HALOS.



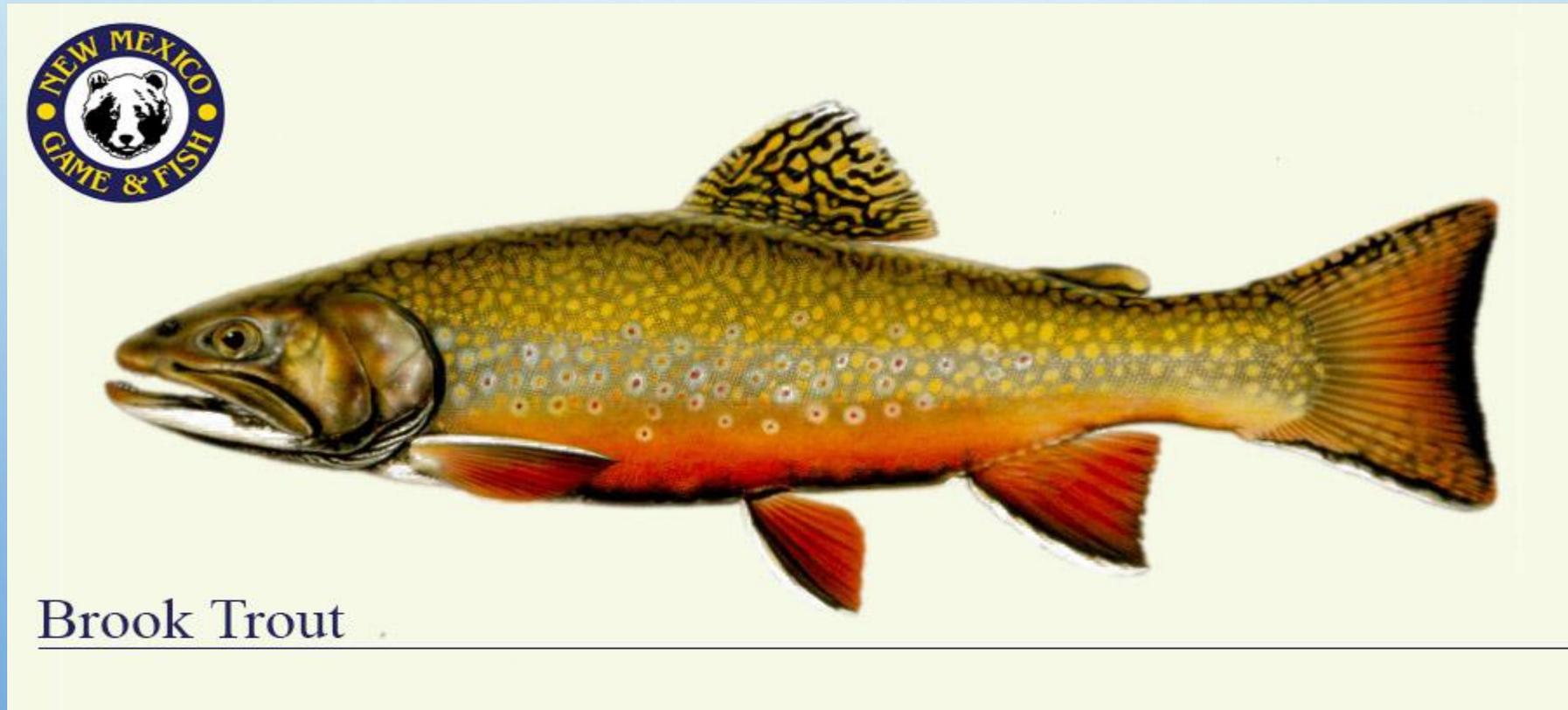
RAINBOW TROUT

- RAINBOW TROUT ARE NATIVE TO NORTH AMERICAN RIVERS AND LAKES WEST OF THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS BUT ARE NOW FOUND THROUGHOUT THE CONTINENT. THEY ARE KNOWN AS HARD-FIGHTING GAME FISH AND ARE STOCKED BY NEW MEXICO DEPARTMENT OF GAME AND FISH THROUGHOUT THE STATE.



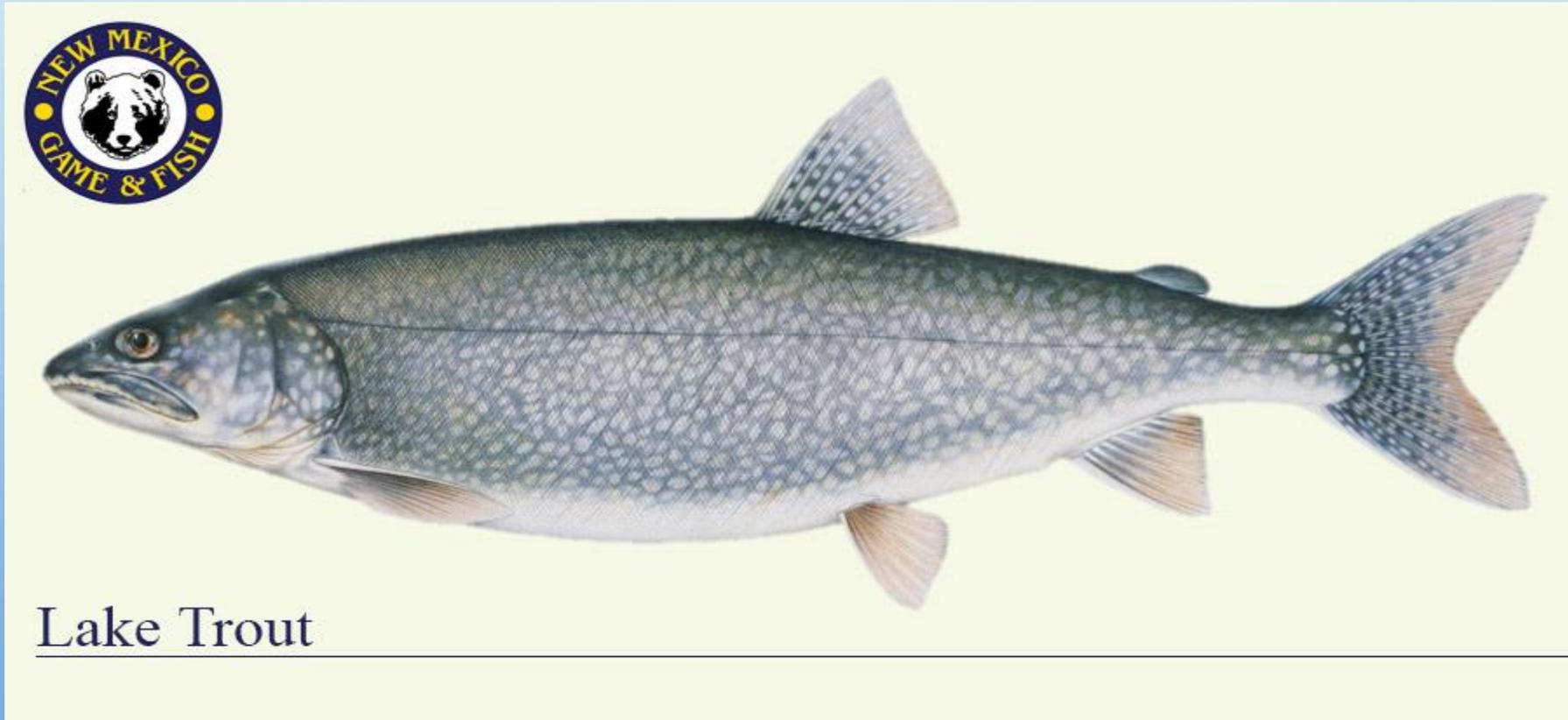
BROOK TROUT

- THE BROOK TROUT IS NATIVE TO THE EASTERN UNITED STATES AND CANADA BUT HAS BEEN INTRODUCED THROUGHOUT NORTH AMERICA. BROOK TROUT ARE FOUND IN A FEW SPRING-FED STREAMS IN NORTHERN NEW MEXICO. THE BROOK TROUT IS OLIVE GREEN WITH YELLOW SPOTS ON ITS BACK.



LAKE TROUT

- LAKE TROUT ARE ACTUALLY MEMBERS OF THE CHAR FAMILY BUT ARE SIMILARLY SHAPED LIKE A TROUT OR SALMON. THEIR BODIES ARE A DARK SILVERY COLOR WITH SMALL CREAM OR YELLOW IRREGULAR-SHAPED SPOTS.



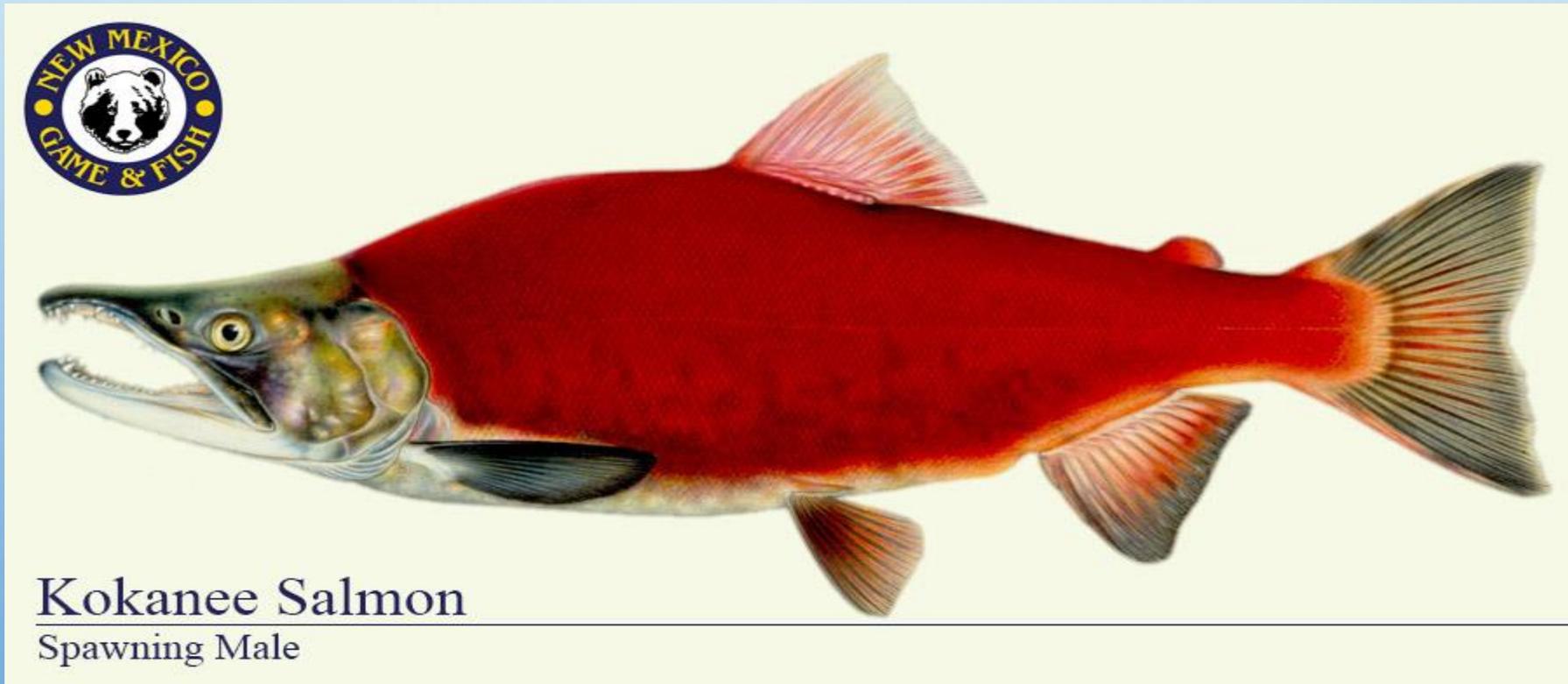
KOKANEE SALMON - *FEMALE*

- KOKANEE SALMON ARE MEMBERS OF THE SOCKEYE SALMON FAMILY. THEY LIVE IN FRESH WATER AND DO NOT MIGRATE TO THE OCEAN TO SPAWN. KOKANEE SALMON ARE WIDESPREAD THROUGHOUT THE WESTERN UNITED STATES AND ARE STRICTLY PLANKTON FEEDERS.



KOKANEE SALMON - MALE

- KOKANEE SALMON REACH MATURITY AT AGE FOUR AND MALES CHANGE DRAMATICALLY IN APPEARANCE. THE SILVERY COLOR CHANGES TO A BRIGHT RED WITH LARGE HOOKED JAWS AND TEETH. ALL ADULTS DIE AFTER SPAWNING AND PROVIDE AN EASY FOOD SOURCE FOR EAGLES AND BEARS.



WARM WATER SPECIES

NEW MEXICO IS HOME TO FIVE SPECIES OF BASS, THREE SPECIES OF CATFISH, THREE SPECIES OF PANFISH, TWO SPECIES OF MUSKIE AND PIKE, TWO SPECIES OF THE PERCH FAMILY AND ONE SPECIES OF GAR.

THE LARGEMOUTH BASS, BLUEGILL, GREEN AND LONGEAR SUNFISH, FLATHEAD, CHANNEL AND BLUE CATFISH AND LONGNOSE GAR ARE ALL NATIVE TO NEW MEXICO.

THE FOLLOWING WARM WATER SPECIES ARE FOUND IN NEW MEXICO:

- **BLACK BASS** - LARGEMOUTH BASS, SMALLMOUTH BASS AND SPOTTED BASS.
- **TEMPERATE BASS** – WHITE BASS AND STRIPED BASS.
- **CATFISH** – CHANNEL CATFISH, BLUE CATFISH AND FLATHEAD CATFISH.
- **PANFISH** – WHITE CRAPPIE, BLUE GILL, GREEN SUNFISH AND LONGEAR SUNFISH.
- **MUSKIE/PIKE** – TIGER MUSKIE AND NORTHERN PIKE.
- **PERCH** – WALLEYE AND YELLOW PERCH.
- **GAR** – LONGNOSE GAR.

LARGEMOUTH BASS NATIVE FISH

- THE LARGEMOUTH BASS IS A STURDY, GREENISH-COLORED FISH WITH A HORIZONTAL DARK STRIPE ALONG ITS SIDE. ITS UPPER JAW IS BIG IN PROPORTION TO ITS BODY, EXTENDING BEYOND THE EYE. THE LARGEMOUTH BASS SPENDS MOST OF ITS TIME IN ITS HOME RANGE— A SMALL, CONCEALED AREA OF DEEP COVER— QUIETLY WAITING FOR FOOD TO COME ITS WAY.



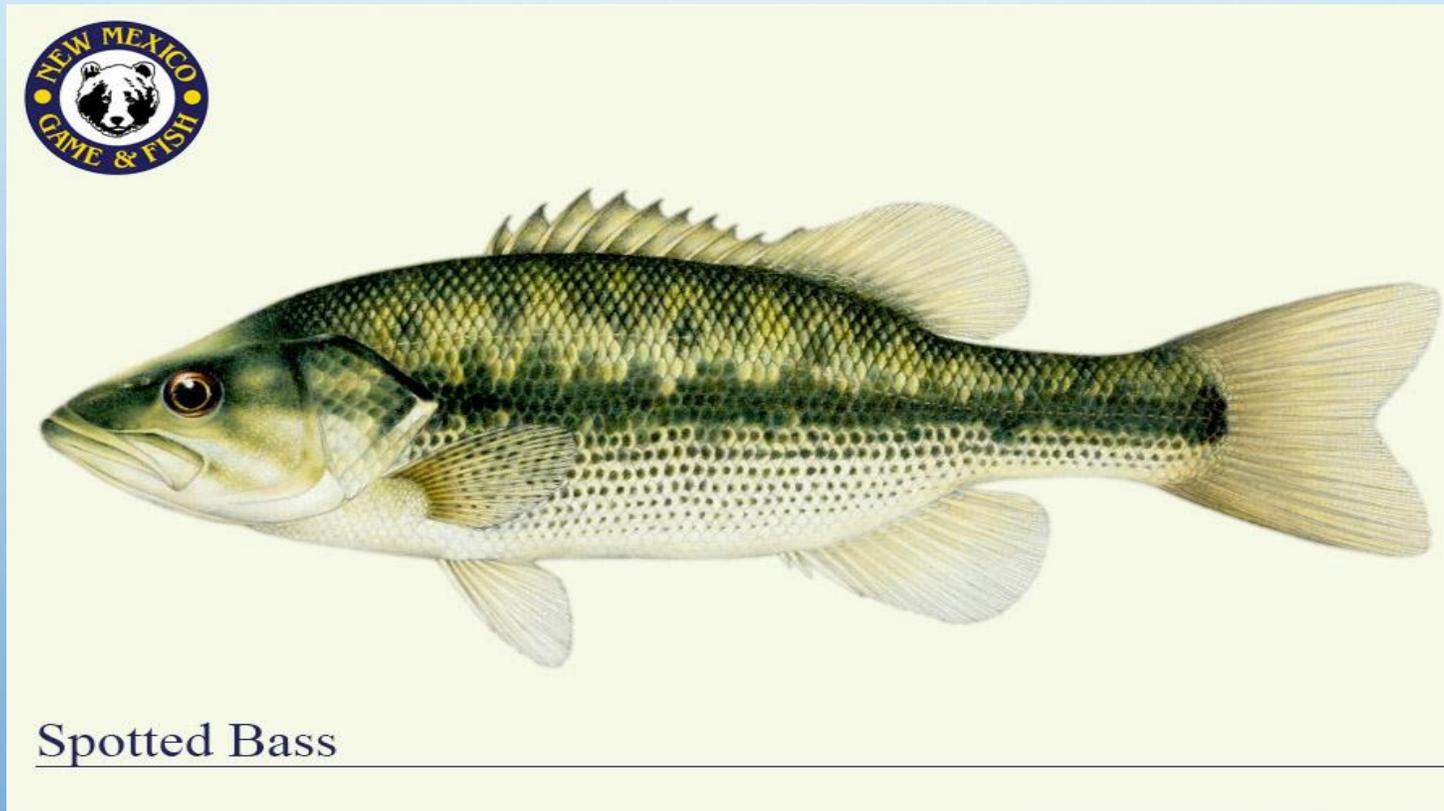
SMALLMOUTH BASS

- SMALLMOUTH BASS ARE TYPICALLY BRONZE-COLORED, WITH DARK VERTICAL STRIPES OR BLOTCHES. THE UPPER JAW IS SMALL AND DOES NOT EXTEND BEYOND THE EYE. IN NEW MEXICO, 'BRONZE BACKS' ARE FOUND IN COOL-WATER RESERVOIRS, AS WELL AS IN PORTIONS OF THE GILA RIVER. THEY PREFER ROCKY UNDERWATER HABITATS.



SPOTTED BASS

- OFTEN MISTAKEN FOR THE MORE COMMON LARGEMOUTH BASS, SPOTTED BASS HAVE SMALLER MOUTHS. SPOTTED BASS PREFER COOL AND WARM MOUNTAIN STREAMS AND RESERVOIRS WITH ROCKY BOTTOMS. THEY FEED ON SMALL FISH, INSECTS, CRUSTACEANS AND FROGS. SPOTTED BASS CAN GROW UP TO 24-INCHES AND WEIGH UP TO 11-POUNDS.



WHITE BASS

- WHITE BASS WERE FIRST STOCKED IN NEW MEXICO IN 1959. SMALLER AND CHUNKIER THAN THEIR STRIPER COUSINS, WHITE BASS TYPICALLY WEIGH ABOUT ONE TO 1.5-POUNDS. OTHER WHITE BASS CHARACTERISTICS INCLUDE SILVERY-WHITE SIDES, MARKED BY A SERIES OF HORIZONTAL STRIPES, ONLY ONE OF WHICH EXTENDS TO THE TAIL. WHITE BASS STAY ON THE MOVE IN A CONTINUAL SEARCH FOR FOOD ALONG SHORELINES AND IN OPEN WATER.



STRIPED BASS

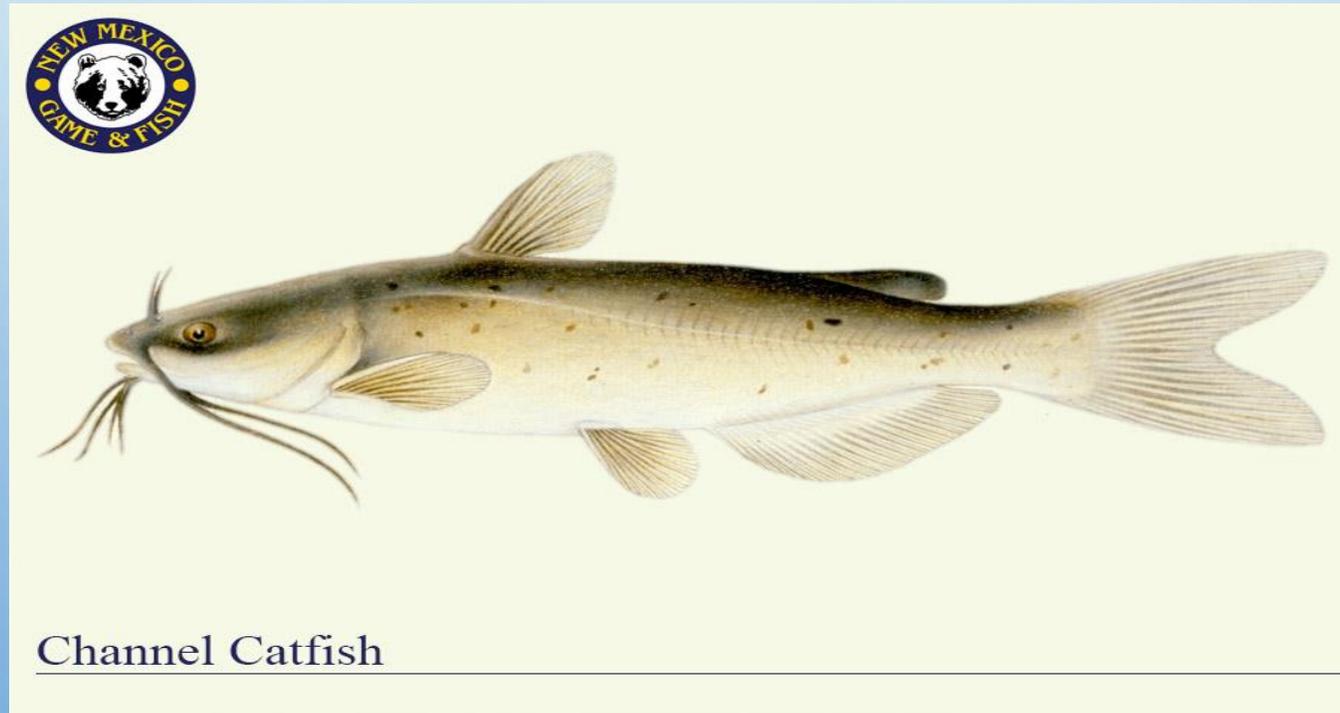
- STRIPED BASS WERE FIRST INTRODUCED INTO NEW MEXICO IN 1972. MOST STRIPED BASS CAUGHT IN NEW MEXICO RANGE FROM FIVE TO 20-POUNDS. STRIPED BASS ARE KNOWN BY THEIR ELONGATED BODIES, PALE OLIVE TO BLUE BACKS, SILVERY SIDES AND SEVEN-TO-EIGHT HORIZONTAL STRIPES. STRIPED BASS PREFER OPEN WATERS AND ARE HEARTY EATERS, MOST ACTIVELY FEEDING IN WATER TEMPERATURES BETWEEN 70 AND 72 DEGREES FAHRENHEIT.



CHANNEL CATFISH

NATIVE FISH

- THIS SPECIES IS WIDELY DISTRIBUTED IN NEW MEXICO BECAUSE IT HAS ADAPTED WELL TO LIFE IN RESERVOIRS. ONCE THEY REACH MATURITY, AT ABOUT 12-INCHES, THEIR SILVERY BLUE-GRAY BODIES BEGIN TO DARKEN AND THEIR SPOTS DIMINISH. ALTHOUGH CHANNEL CATFISH PREFER CLEAR, SLOW-MOVING WATER, THEY'RE HIGHLY TOLERANT OF TURBID WATER. THEY CAN GROW TO OVER 30-INCHES, THOUGH 12 TO 16-INCHES ARE MORE COMMON IN NEW MEXICO WATERS.



FLATHEAD CATFISH

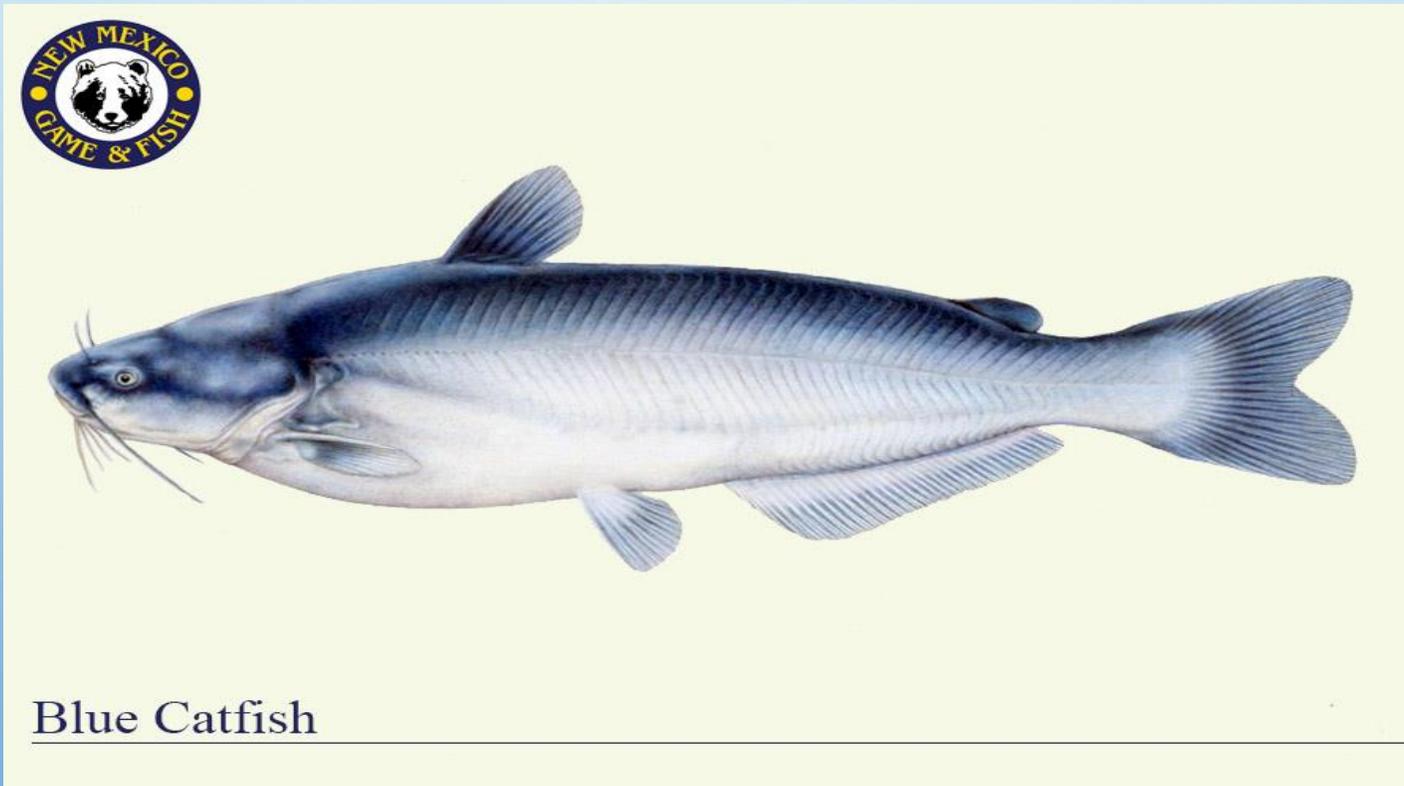
NATIVE FISH

- THE FLATHEAD IS MOST EASILY DISTINGUISHED FROM THE CHANNEL CATFISH BY ITS GRAY TO YELLOWISH-BROWN COLORATION. OTHER IDENTIFYING MARKS ARE ITS FLATTENED HEAD, JUTTING LOWER JAW, VERY LARGE MOUTH AND SQUARED TAIL FIN. FLATHEAD CATFISH DON'T MATURE UNTIL THEY REACH 15 TO 19-INCHES AND CAN LIVE UP TO 25 YEARS. A FLATHEAD TENDS TO HAVE A HOME RANGE, SPENDING MOST OF ITS TIME IN A RESTING SPOT.



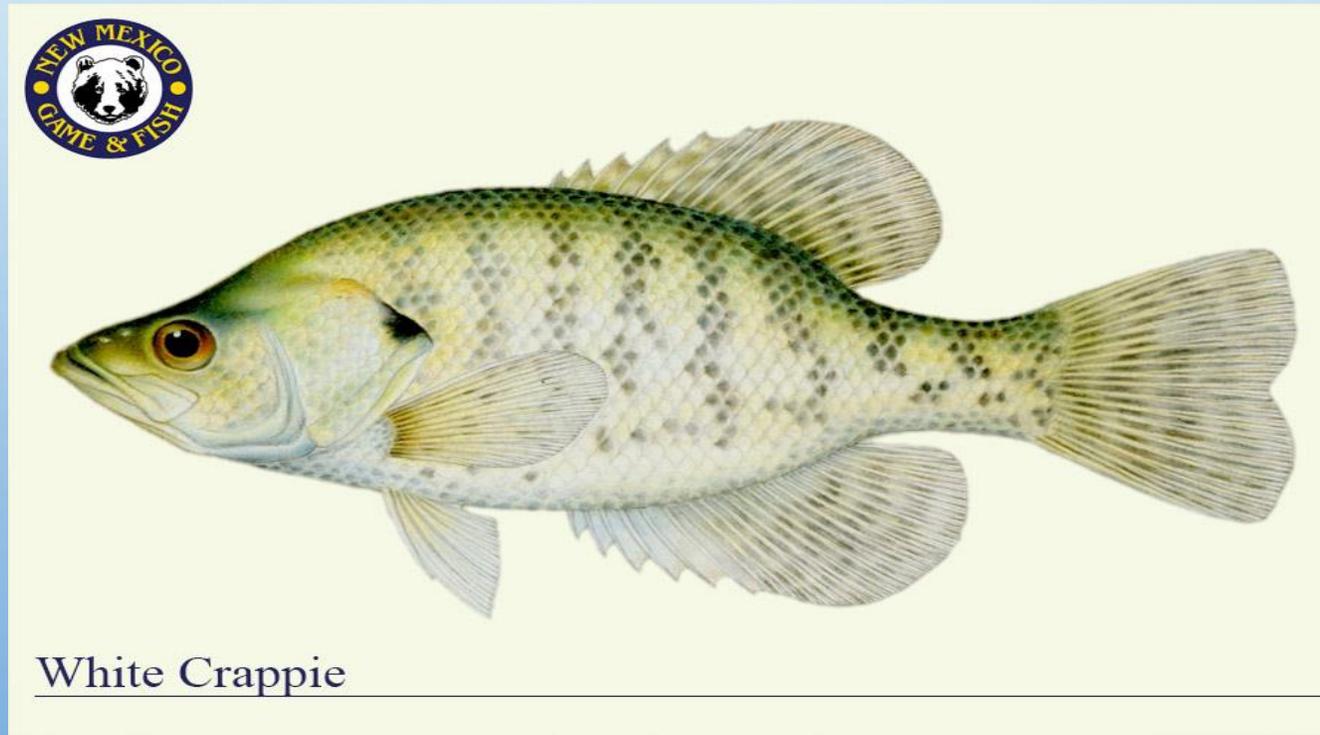
BLUE CATFISH NATIVE FISH

- THE BLUE CATFISH IS THE LARGEST NORTH AMERICAN SPECIES OF THE CATFISH FAMILY, WITH A TYPICAL LENGTH OF 25 TO 46-INCHES AND CAN WEIGH UP TO 150 POUNDS. BLUE CATFISH CAN LIVE UP TO 20 YEARS. THEY ARE HEAVY-BODIED, BLUEISH GREY IN COLOR AND HAVE A DORSAL HUMP. BLUE CATFISH ARE PREDATORS AND EAT CRAWFISH, FROGS AND ANY TYPE OF FISH THEY CAN CATCH.



WHITE CRAPPIE

- THE WHITE CRAPPIE IS A MEMBER OF THE SUNFISH FAMILY, WHICH ALSO INCLUDES LARGEMOUTH AND SMALLMOUTH BASS. THIS OLIVE-COLORED FISH HAS A SILVERY CAST TO ITS COLORATION, AND SEVEN TO EIGHT INDISTINCT VERTICAL STRIPES ALONG ITS SIDES. IT ADAPTS EASILY TO VARIOUS CONDITIONS, PARTICULARLY WARM TURBID WATERS WITH PROTECTIVE COVER, SUCH AS BOULDERS AND SUBMERGED BRUSH PILES OR TREES.



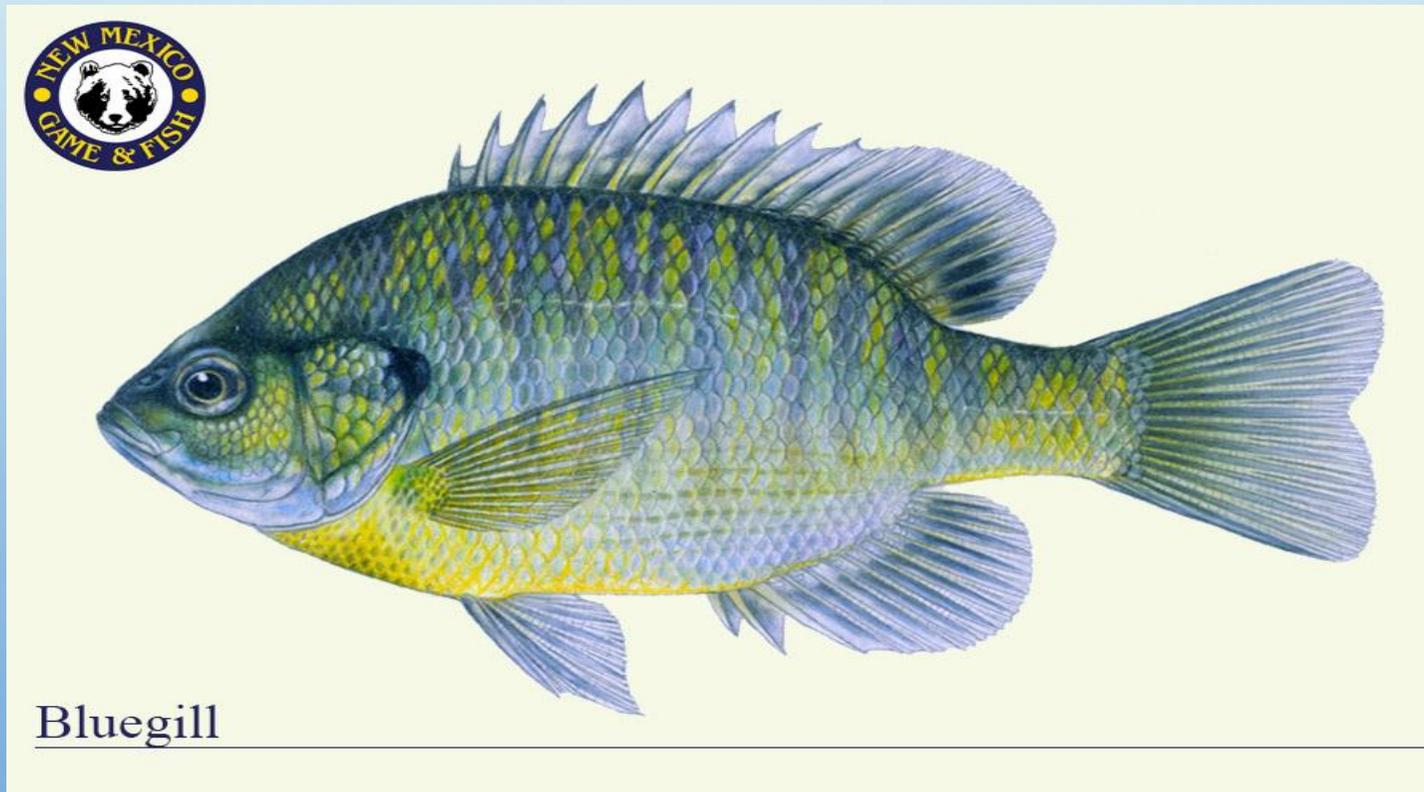
GREEN SUNFISH NATIVE FISH

- THIS SPECIES IS DISTINGUISHED FROM OTHER PANFISH BY ITS VERY LARGE MOUTH AND SHORT, ROUNDED PECTORAL FINS. ITS BODY IS OLIVE-BROWN WITH SEVEN TO 12 VERTICAL - BARS ALONG ITS SIDE. THE GREEN SUNFISH LIVES IN PONDS, SHALLOW LAKES AND RIVER BACKWATERS. NATIVE TO THE PECOS AND CANADIAN RIVER DRAINAGES, THE GREEN SUNFISH WAS INTRODUCED INTO OTHER NEW MEXICO DRAINAGES DURING THE 1930s.



BLUEGILL NATIVE FISH

- ANGLERS CAN FIND THIS FEISTY, 5 TO 7-INCH BLUEGILL IN ALMOST ANY WARM NEW MEXICO WATERS. AN IRIDESCENT BLUE COLOR ON THE LOWER JAW AND GILL COVER GIVES THE BLUEGILL ITS COMMON NAME. THE BLUEGILL HAS A ROUNDED FLAT BODY, SMALL MOUTH, OLIVE-BROWN BACK AND FIVE TO NINE INDISTINCT VERTICAL DOUBLE BARS ALONG ITS SIDES. BLUEGILL WERE INTRODUCED THROUGHOUT NEW MEXICO DURING THE 1930s.



LONGEAR SUNFISH NATIVE FISH

- NATIVE TO SOUTHEASTERN NEW MEXICO, THE LONGEAR SUNFISH CAN GROW TO 9.5-INCHES AND 1.7-POUNDS. THEY LIVE UP TO SIX YEARS AND ARE VERY COLORFUL WITH AN OLIVE TO RUSTY-BROWN BACK, BRIGHT ORANGE BELLY AND BLUE-GREEN BARS ON THE SIDE OF THEIR HEAD. THEY PREFER DENSELY VEGETATED, SHALLOW WATER AND EAT AQUATIC INSECTS AND SMALL FISH.



YELLOW PERCH

- THE ONLY FRESHWATER FISH WITH A YELLOW-HUED BODY, THE YELLOW PERCH HAS SIX TO EIGHT DISTINCT, BLACK VERTICAL BLOTCHES ALONG ITS SIDES. WITH ITS TINY BRUSH-LIKE TEETH, YELLOW PERCH FEED UPON ZOOPLANKTON AND AQUATIC INSECTS. THEY ARE PREYED UPON BY WALLEYE AND BLACK BASS. YELLOW PERCH PREFER COLD, CLEAR POND-LIKE HABITATS.



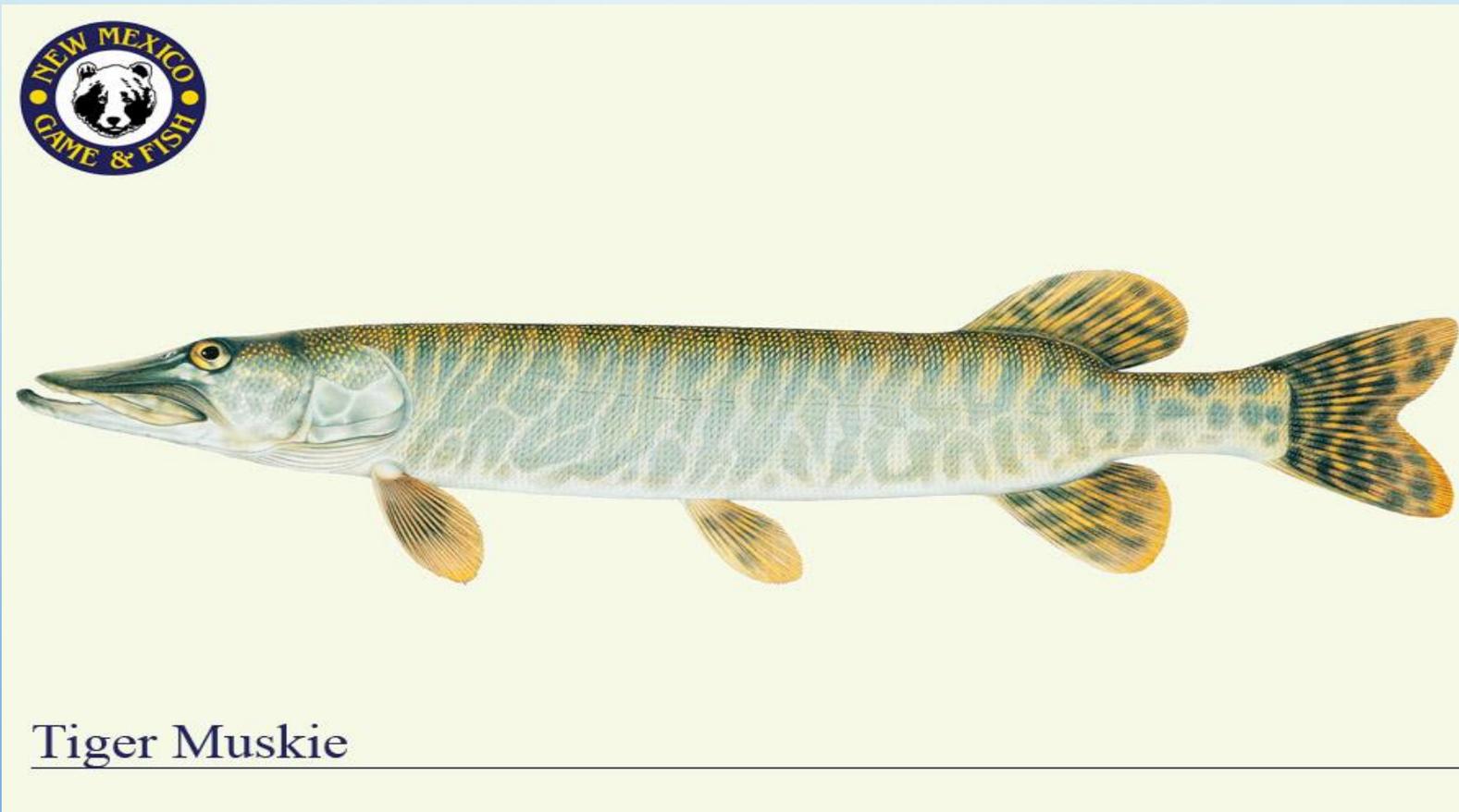
WALLEYE

- WITH A MOUTHFUL OF NEEDLE-SHARP TEETH AND A JUTTING LOWER JAW, THE WALLEYE IS A FORMIDABLE PREDATOR. WALLEYE HOVER IN DARK WATERS FAR BENEATH THE SURFACE AND AVOID SUNSHINE AND CALM WATER, INSTEAD PREFERRING WINDS (3-10 MPH), SMALL SURFACE WAVES AND DEPTHS OF 20 TO 60-FEET. WALLEYE ARE AT THE PEAK OF FEEDING IN 64-DEGREE WATER.



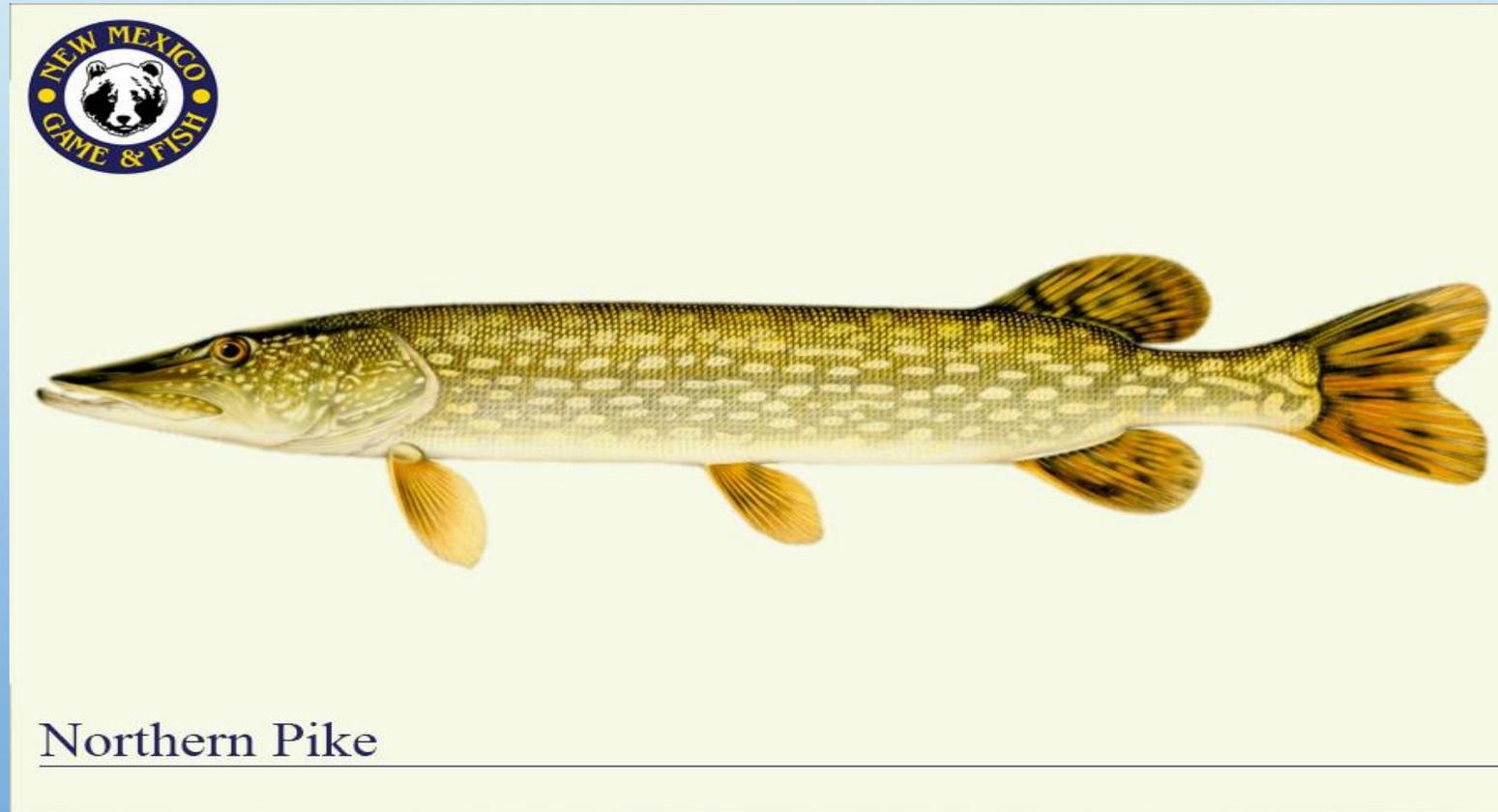
TIGER MUSKIE

- TIGER MUSKIES ARE A CROSS BETWEEN THE NORTHERN PIKE AND MUSKELLUNGE. WHEN FISHING, THE MINIMUM LENGTH TO KEEP A TIGER MUSKIE IN NEW MEXICO IS 40-INCHES. THE DAILY BAG LIMIT AND POSSESSION LIMIT ARE THE SAME, ONE TIGER MUSKIE 40-INCHES OR LONGER.



NORTHERN PIKE

- A VORACIOUS PREDATOR WITH A LARGE MOUTH AND SHARP TEETH, NORTHERN PIKE CAN REACH LENGTHS OF 30-INCHES OR MORE AND HAVE BEEN KNOWN TO HUNT IN GROUPS. THE DORSAL FIN IS LOCATED NEAR THE BACK END OF THE FISH. PIKE ARE AN OLIVE-GREEN COLOR THAT FADES TO WHITE ON THE BOTTOM.



LONGNOSE GAR NATIVE FISH

- THE LONGNOSE GAR IS A HIGHLY EVOLVED, RAY-FINNED FISH THAT HAS BEEN PRESENT IN NORTH AMERICA FOR OVER 100 MILLION YEARS. IT HAS AN OLIVE-BROWN/GREEN TORPEDO-SHAPED BODY, DIAMOND-SHAPED SCALES AND AN ELONGATED SNOUT WITH VERY SHARP TEETH. GAR EAT SMALL FISH, CAN LIVE 10 TO 15 YEARS, GROW FOUR TO SIX FEET IN LENGTH AND CAN REACH 50 POUNDS IN WEIGHT.

