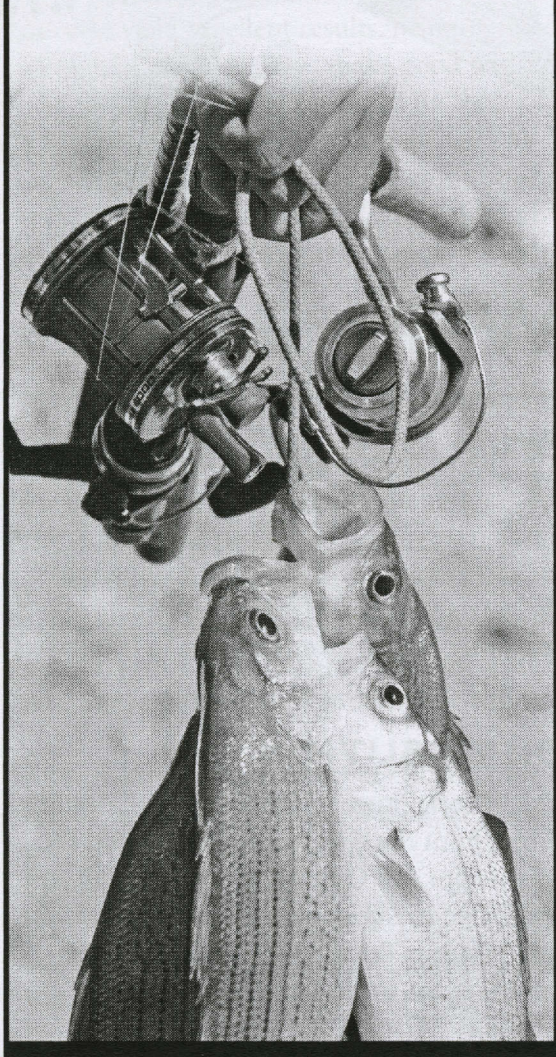
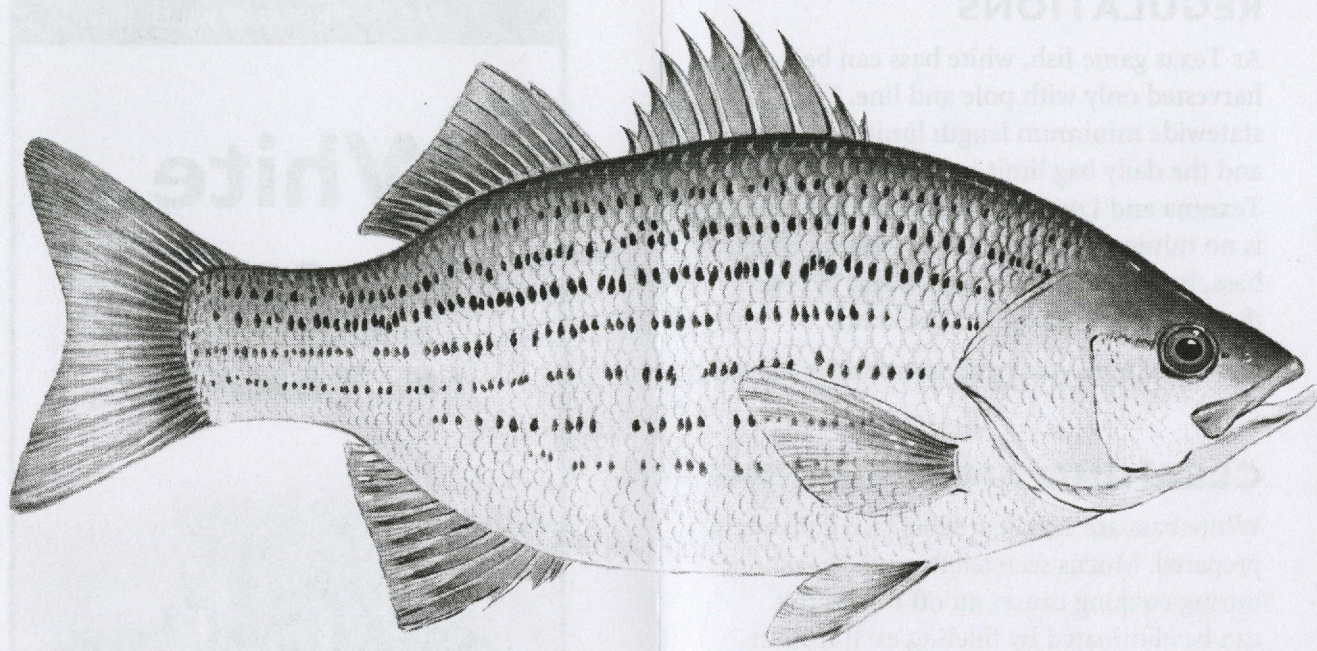


TEXAS PARKS AND WILDLIFE

# White Bass

IN TEXAS





## White Bass

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**T**he white bass (*Morone chrysops*) is an abundant and popular sport fish in Texas reservoirs. These lively fish, also known as “sand bass,” provide action throughout the year and especially during their spring spawning run up river and stream tributaries.

### DISTRIBUTION

The historic range of the white bass extended throughout the Great Lakes region and the Mississippi and Ohio river valleys. Prior to 1932, Caddo Lake on Cypress Bayou was the only place in Texas where the species was known to occur. In that year, the Texas Game,

Fish and Oyster Commission took 13 brood fish from Caddo and stocked them into old Lake Dallas, now part of Lake Lewisville.

In 1938, state biologists stocked whites in lakes Kemp, Buchanan, Medina, Eagle Mountain, Waco and Wichita. When those introductions proved successful, others followed. Today, most major Texas reservoirs support fishable populations of white bass. Lakes Arrowhead, Benbrook, Buchanan, Corpus Christi, Fort Phantom Hill, Lewisville, Livingston, Ray Hubbard, Ray Roberts, Whitney and Wright Patman have produced excellent catches.

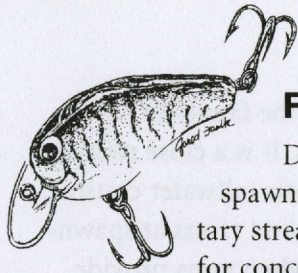
### LIFE CYCLE

The white bass belongs to the family of temperate or “true” basses. It is a close relative of the striped bass. Like their saltwater cousins, white bass ascend streams and rivers at spawning time. In early spring, when rains provide flow and water temperatures reach 55 to 60°F, whites gather in the upper ends of reservoirs and begin migrating into creek arms.

White bass spawn over gravel or rock in 2 to 8 feet of flowing water. If creeks aren’t moving fast enough, whites will spawn over windswept, rocky points where wave action mimics flowing water. A 2-pound female can produce up to 900,000 eggs. Fertilized eggs settle and stick to rocks on the bottom. They usually hatch within three days.

Newly hatched fry migrate downstream toward the reservoir, joining together in schools to seek food and protection. They feed on microscopic animals, advancing to insect larvae as they grow. By midsummer, they’re eating small shad and minnows. Shad continue to make up a large part of the diet as white bass mature into adults. Schools of whites travel reservoirs in summer and early fall, aggressively hunting for food. They continue this schooling activity throughout life.

In Texas, white bass typically grow to 8 inches in their first year. They seldom live more than five years or weigh more than 3.5 pounds. The state record, caught in 1977, weighed 5 pounds, 9 ounces and measured 20.75 inches.

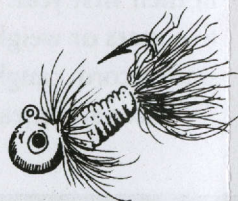


## FISHING TIPS

During the spring spawning run, watch tributary streams after a rain event for concentrations of white bass. Males usually head upstream about a month before the females. After spawning, adults will slowly move back to the main reservoir. Wade fishing works well at this time, but fishing from the bank or a boat can also yield excellent results. Minnows and silversides, alive or dead, make good natural bait. Dead bait should be fished on the bottom while live bait can be fished at any depth. Popular lures for the spawning season include jigs, spinners, soft plastic shad and small crank baits. Productive colors include white, silver, pearl, chartreuse, yellow, clear metal-flake and chartreuse metal-flake.

At other times of year, look for white bass in open water and the backs of coves. Schools of feeding bass drive shad to the surface. This attracts birds such as gulls and terns. If you see birds circling and diving for fish, you're likely to find bass below. A school will often surface several times in the same general area. Crank baits, soft plastic shad and topwater baits are good at these times.

After the bass return to deeper water, they can be located with sonar. Fishing at night with a floating light, or near a lighted dock, can be very productive in late spring and summer. Try natural baits, slabs or jigs, or troll deep-diving crank baits.



## REGULATIONS

As Texas game fish, white bass can be harvested only with pole and line. The statewide minimum length limit is 10 inches and the daily bag limit is 25 fish. On Lake Texoma and Louisiana border waters, there is no minimum length for harvesting white bass, but the daily bag limit is still 25. For the most current regulations, check

[www.tpwd.texas.gov/regulations/outdoor-annual](http://www.tpwd.texas.gov/regulations/outdoor-annual)

## CLEANING AND COOKING

White bass are excellent table fare if properly prepared. Mucus secreted from the backbone during cooking causes an off flavor; this can be eliminated by filleting each fish. In addition, the red-meat portion of each fillet should be removed. The two slabs of boneless fish thus obtained can be fried, baked, broiled, smoked, grilled or boiled.



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