



PUMPKINSEED

ONTARIO'S COLOURFUL PANFISH

Pumpkinseed sunfish are one of Ontario's most recognizable panfish. Found in warm, weedy lakes, ponds, and slow rivers, they are beautiful, common, and fun to catch on light tackle.



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SPECIES OVERVIEW



- Scientific Name:** *Lepomis gibbosus*
- Family:** Centrarchidae (Sunfish Family)
- Average Size:** 10–20 cm (4–8 in.)
- Larger Fish:** Up to about 25 cm (10 in.)
- Diet:** Insects, larvae, snails, and small crustaceans
- Best Time:** Late spring to early fall
- Great for beginners and kids**

IDENTIFICATION

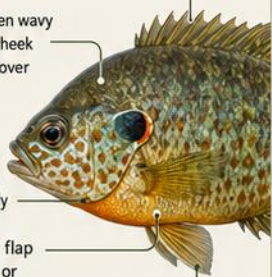
Deep, rounded body

Blue-green wavy lines on cheek and gill cover

Orange to yellow belly

Dark ear flap with red or orange edge

Spiny front dorsal fin



WHERE TO FIND PUMPKINSEED



Warm, shallow lakes and ponds



Weed beds and reed edges



Docks, fallen timber, and quiet bays



Slow-moving rivers and backwaters



Often close to shore in summer



BEST TIME TO FISH



Spring: Move shallow during the spawning period



Summer: Active around weeds, docks, and shade



Fall: Still catchable around shallow cover



Winter: Sometimes caught through the ice

HOW TO CATCH PUMPKINSEED



Use ultralight tackle



Fish small hooks with worms or waxworms



Try tiny jigs, micro soft plastics, or small spinners



Use a small float near weeds and shoreline cover

TOP BAITS & LURES



Worms and redworms



Waxworms



Tiny jigs



Small inline spinners



Micro grubs and soft plastics

GEAR RECOMMENDATIONS



Rod: 5'–6'6" light or ultralight spinning rod



Reel: 500–2000 size spinning reel



Line: 2–6 lb mono or fluorocarbon



Hook: Size 8–12



Float: Small fixed or slip float

CATCH, HANDLE & RELEASE



- ✓ Wet your hands before handling
- ✓ Support the fish gently
- ✓ Use small hooks to reduce harm
- ✓ Release fish quickly if not keeping them

ONTARIO NOTES



- Common across much of Ontario
- Often one of the first fish young anglers catch
- Check current regulations for your Fisheries Management Zone



DID YOU KNOW?



Pumpkinseeds can crush snails with strong throat teeth.



Males build and guard circular nests in shallow water.

PRO TIPS

- ★ Fish calm shorelines on sunny days
- ★ Target weeds, docks, and sandy pockets
- ★ A tiny float-and-worm setup is hard to beat



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