

Dichotomous Key to Identify Common Minnesota Fish

1a. Is ANY part of the dorsal fin located near the middle of the fish's back?.....**Go to 2**

1b. Is there a single dorsal fin located close to the caudal fin?.....**Go to 3**

2a. Does the fish's dorsal fin appear to have at least 1 spine?.....**Go to 4**

2b. Does the fish's dorsal fin appear to be made of soft rays?.....**Go to 5**

3a. Is the fish's body color darker with lighter horizontal markings?.....Northern Pike

3b. Is the fish's body color lighter with darker vertical markings?.....Muskellunge

4a. Does the fish appear to have "whiskers"?.....Channel Catfish

4b. Does the second part of the dorsal fin appear more squared?.....**Go to 6**

4c. Does the second part of the dorsal fin appear more rounded?.....**Go to 7**

5a. Does the fish have worm-like markings and white leading edges on its fins?Brook Trout

5b. Does the fish have a pink stripe on the side of its body?.....Rainbow Trout

5c. Does the fish have large dark spots and red dots with light halos on its sides?.....Brown Trout

6a. Is there a white spot on the lower part of the caudal fin?.....Walleye

6b. Are there between 6-9 dark vertical bars on the body?.....Yellow Perch

6c. Are there many black spots on the spiny 1st dorsal fin.....Sauger

7a. Does the fish have speckled fins?.....**Go to 8**

7b. Does the fish have a large black "ear" spot on its gill covering?.....**Go to 9**

7c. Does the fish's upper jaw extend just to the middle of a red eye?.....Smallmouth Bass

7d. Does the line of the fish's top jaw extend beyond a non-red eye?.....Largemouth Bass

8a. Is the dorsal fin spine count 6 or less?.....White Crappie

8b. Is the dorsal fin spine count 7 or more?.....Black Crappie

9a. Is the "ear" spot all black?.....Bluegill Sunfish

9b. Does the "ear" spot have a white and red edge?.....Pumpkinseed