



Dollar Sunfish (*Lepomis marginatus*)

The dollar sunfish is one of the smallest sunfish in Alabama. Anglers may catch a dollar sunfish, but since it is so small, they do not want to eat it.

A dollar sunfish has olive on its back with orange and brown flecks. The rest of its body is pale yellow to white. Vertical fins are light yellow to gray.* A breeding male is more colorful; it becomes bright golden-orange underneath with iridescent blue scales.* The vertical fins become much darker, and broad bands of yellowish orange form at their bases. The head is covered with blue squiggly lines.

Because the dollar sunfish has a black ear flap with an edge of light green, it may be confused with a longear sunfish. However, the black portion of the dollar sunfish's ear flap has bluish green spots and wavy stripes. The rear of the longear sunfish's ear flap is solid black. A dollar sunfish has pectoral fins with 12 rays.*

A dollar sunfish would be found in slower moving streams. It is not common and is most abundant on the Coastal Plain.* Alabama's fish and wildlife belong to all of us, and we rely on state and federal agencies to protect them.

***Vocabulary**

Anal fin – a single fin on the bottom of a fish behind the anus.

Breeding – ready to reproduce.

Coastal Plain – the geological region that is relatively flat and has little exposed bedrock; the Coastal Plain is the largest of the five main geological regions in Alabama.

Dorsal fin – the fin or fins on top of a fish.

Fin ray – the hard, boney part of a fin that can be flexible.

Pectoral fins – a pair of side fins behind the head.

Vertical fins – both dorsal fins and anal fins.