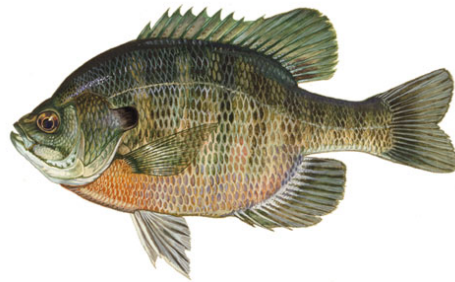


Bluegill Anatomy Vocabulary



Anal fin – the single fin on the fish’s ventral surface (belly) closest to the tail. It helps with stability.

Caudal fin – also known as the tail fin, this fin is the primary fin used for swimming. It also serves as a rudder, helping to steer the fish. A bluegill’s caudal fin is slightly forked with rounded lobes, which allows for sudden bursts of speed over short distances.

Dorsal fin – the fin on the fish’s dorsal surface (back). It is used for swimming and stabilization (helps keep the fish from rolling over).

- The front of the dorsal fin has 9 to 12 sharp spines and is called the **spiny dorsal fin**; these spines make bluegills difficult for predators to swallow.
- The part of the dorsal fin closer to the tail does not have spines and is called the **soft dorsal fin**.

Earflap – also called opercular flap, this is the extension of the operculum above the pectoral fin. In bluegills, the earflap is usually black.

Eye – During the day, bluegills use vision to find prey, detect predators and recognize mates. Their eyes are very sensitive to contrast and are adapted for sensing small moving objects in bright light. Even though they do not have eyelids, their eyes are able to filter out harmful UV radiation.

Operculum – the bony plate that covers the gills

Pectoral fin – the pair of fins on the sides of the fish near the operculum. They help with braking and maneuvering.

Pelvic fin – the pair of fins on the ventral (belly) surface of the fish, directly below the dorsal fin. They help with maneuvering, especially up and down, and braking.