



Bluegill (*Lepomis macrochirus*)

A bluegill is a type of sunfish. Many people in Alabama call it a bream. The bluegill is the most commonly found fish in Alabama. It is found in streams, rivers, swamps, ponds and lakes. Popular with anglers, a bluegill is fun to catch. Its white flaky meat is very tasty.

True to its name, a bluegill has blue on its chin area near its gills. A young bluegill is light olive to gray on the back and sides with several pairs of dark vertical bands. Its belly is pale yellow to white. A breeding male is darker with a coppery area below its pectoral fins and some purple in the olive sides.* Its flexible gill flap is all black, and it is as wide as it is long. A bluegill's pectoral fins are long and pointed.

A bluegill has a small mouth, which is good for eating insects. Its round, plate-like shape allows it to point its mouth up, to feed on insects that fall into the water, or down, to feed on insects in the bottom mud. The bluegill's round shape also makes it more difficult for predators to eat it (bass like to eat bluegill).

Bluegill fishing provides an excellent experience for the whole family. When anglers and hunters buy fishing and hunting licenses, equipment, and gas; they contribute to Alabama's efforts to manage our aquatic and wildlife resources.

***Vocabulary**

Breeding – ready to reproduce.

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