

Fish found in Maricopa County, AZ

Maricopa County is located within the Sonoran Desert, an arid region covering 120,000 square miles in southwestern Arizona, southeastern and most of Baja California, as well as the western half of the state of Sonora, Mexico.

Most of the fish found in the waters of Maricopa County are **non-native**. This means they were introduced to the environment through a transfer from somewhere else.

There are three Maricopa County Parks with perennial flowing surface water:

Lake Pleasant Regional Park

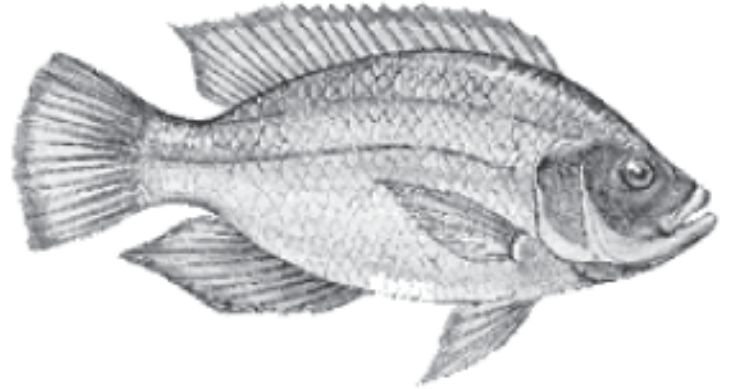
Gila River at Estrella Mountain Regional Park

Cave Creek at Spur Cross Ranch Conservation Area

Although the waterways are located within park boundaries, the **Arizona Game and Fish Department** manages all of the wildlife that call these areas home. This agency stocks all of the waterways with the appropriate fish, as well as issues **fishing licenses, a requirement** when fishing at any Maricopa County park.

You may contact the AZ Game and Fish Department directly at 602.942.3000 or visit the website at www.gf.state.az.us/index.shtml.

Fish



Tilapia

Illustration courtesy of AZ Game & Fish Dept.

Wildlife of Maricopa County Parks

Notes:





Bass, Largemouth *Micropterus salmoides* **A**
Non-native; introduced in 1897. Olive-green color and dark horizontal band on each side. Reaches over 16 lbs.



Bass, Striped *Morone saxatilis* **L**
Non-native; introduced in 1959. Body has black horizontal stripes on silvery-white sides. Can weigh up to 59 lbs.



Bass, White *Morone chrysops* **L** Non-native; introduced in 1960. Silver-white body with dark horizontal lines which fade and are broken below the lateral line. Up to 4 lbs.



Bluegill *Lepomis macrochirus* **L E**
Non-native; introduced in 1932. Blue coloring on the chin, a solid black opercle flap, and small mouth. Weighs up to 3 lbs.



Carp, Common *Cyprinus carpio* **L E**
Non-native; introduced in 1880. Large dark edge scales on yellowish gold sides, with two barbells at the corner of the upper lip. Up to 40 lbs.



Catfish, Channel *Ictalurus punctatus* **L E**
Non-native; introduced in 1903. Bottom feeder has scattered black spots on a gray scaleless skin leading to a white belly; has whiskers; deeply forked tail. Up to 35 lbs.



Catfish, Flathead *Pylodictis olivaris* **L E**
Non-native; introduced in the 1940's. Whiskers, flat head and lower jaw projecting beyond the upper jaw. The tail fin is only slightly notched. Up to 70 lbs.



Catfish, Yellow Bullhead *Ictalurus natalis* **E**
Non-native. Yellowish sides and a yellow to white belly. Small; rarely over 4 lbs.



Crappie, Black *Pomoxis nigromaculatus* **L E**
Non-native; introduced in 1905. Head and back are heavily/irregularly spotted with black blotches on a silver-olive background. Found in most warm water reservoirs; travel in schools. Up to 4 lbs.



Crappie, White *Pomoxis annularis* **L**
Non-native; introduced in 1903. Lake Pleasant is the only lake in Arizona where this fish is caught. White crappie is more silver than black crappie; black markings run in a more vertical bars pattern rather than random spots.

Dace, Longfin *Agosia chrysogaster* **L S**

The only native fish found in side washes at Lake Pleasant. Very small silver and gold fish with a black lateral line.



Dace, Speckled *Rhinichthys osculus* **S**

Native fish found above Spur Cross area. Occupies many isolated western drainages, and is found rarely in lakes.



Goldfish *Carassius auratus* **E**

Non-native. Found in shallow, muddy, warm pools of water.



Minnnow, Fathead *Pimephales promelas* **S**

Non-native with short flat head, fat body, and blunt snout. Occurs all over North America and might have been introduced to Arizona through bait buckets.



Mosquitofish *Gambusia affinis* **A**

Non-native. Used for mosquito control.



Sailfin Molly *Poecilia latipinna* **E**

Non-native. Male has sail-like dorsal fin.



Shiner, Golden *Notemigonus crysoleucas* **L**

Non-native. Flat body with small mouth.



Shiner, Red *Notropis lutrensis* **L**

Non-native. Tolerant of heavy silt.



Sunfish, Green *Lepomis cyanellus* **A**

Non-native; introduced in 1926. Has a large mouth and blue-green striations on the cheeks. Likes rocky or brushy areas.



Sunfish, Redear *Lepomis microlophus* **L E**

Non-native; introduced in 1946. Black opercle flap is bordered with a reddish color on the rear of the gill flap, hence the name. Small mouth commonly rejects bait.



Threadfin Shad *Dorosoma petenense* **L E**

Non-native. Forage fish found over mud.



Tilapia *Species unknown* **L E**

Exotic species from Africa, introduced to Arizona in the 1960's. There are at least four distinct species of tilapia, but I.D. separation is difficult. Similar in shape to the bluegill, these fish are more silvery with two lateral lines and can weigh over 5 lbs.



Letters indicate which park the fish is found.
A=All three parks **E**=Estrella Mtn. Reg'l. Park
L=Lake Pleasant Reg'l. Park **S**=Spur Cross Ranch Conserv. Area