

# Sheldon Lake Environmental Learning Center

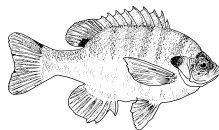
Texas Parks and Wildlife

## ***PROCEDURE***

In order to provide a safe, yet natural experience in our state park, we ask your group to follow the following guidelines:

### **FISHING**

- 1.) A **group leader should visit the Learning Center site before your visit** to “get the lay of the land” and learn the best route to the site.(Key Map 42nd ed.,pp. 417, 457)
- 2.) To maximize safety and a positive experience, **group size for fishing should not exceed 25 children** . (An additional 25 children may participate in another activity, such as a nature walk, at the same time. One group will fish for 60-90 minutes, then participate in a nature walk or other activity for the same amount of time).
- 3.) At least **one participating adult per 10 children is required! A 1:5 ratio is recommended.** Park staff and volunteers will lead the fishing program, but active participation by group leaders and chaperones is necessary to assist them. **“Active participation”** includes maintaining discipline, keeping children spaced at least 10’ apart, baiting hooks, removing fish, etc. *Adults are expected to assist the children, not fish themselves!*
- 4.) Cane poles are used with young or inexperienced fishermen. Rods and reels are used with older children when indicated by the park staff. Fishing is “catch-and-release” only.
- 5.) **Safety rules for fishing include a).** No running. **b).** Wear safety glasses provided at site. **c).** Maintain a 10’ or greater space between fishermen, **d).** Keep the pole tip vertical in the air when walking, **e).** Hold the fishing line a few inches above the hook when walking with the pole. Repeated violation of these rules will result in a 5-10 minute “fishing time out.” **The pond is up to 6’ deep.** Reach poles/throw ropes are on shore if necessary.
- 6.) **Prepare your group for the trip.** Remind children that their best behavior is expected. Go over park rules. Food, candy and drinks are allowed in the picnic area only, **not** at the fishing ponds. Collecting or harming plants or animals is prohibited. **The group must leave the areas they use clean!** Please recycle aluminum cans and plastic bottles in the barrels provided.
- 7.) Remind the group that they are visiting a state park, not a zoo or amusement park. The park’s animals are wild and must obtain their own food. They are not in cages or fed by the staff. **Alligators may be present in the ponds.** Do not feed or tease them! **Fire ants and poison ivy are abundant.** Respect and learn about our wild animals, but don’t fear them.
- 8.) Emphasize that group members should **dress appropriately for the weather** including jackets and hats when necessary. **No open-toed shoes, please!**
- 9.) Restrooms will be in the classroom or portacans as indicated by the staff person on duty,



OVER ►

# VOCABULARY

**Bait**—Worms, crickets, or other natural or artificial foods secured to the hook to attract fish.

**Bobber**—A round, plastic ball which floats on the water surface and is attached to the fishing line above the hook and sinker. Also called a float or cork.

**Cane pole**—A long, slender wooden rod without a reel used to catch fish.

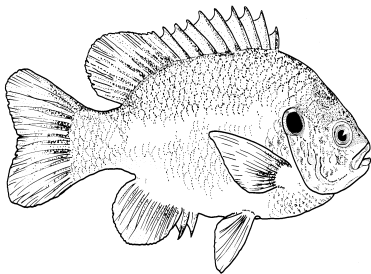
**Fingerling**—A juvenile fish that is usually only a few inches long.

**Hook**—A curved piece of metal with a point used to catch fish.

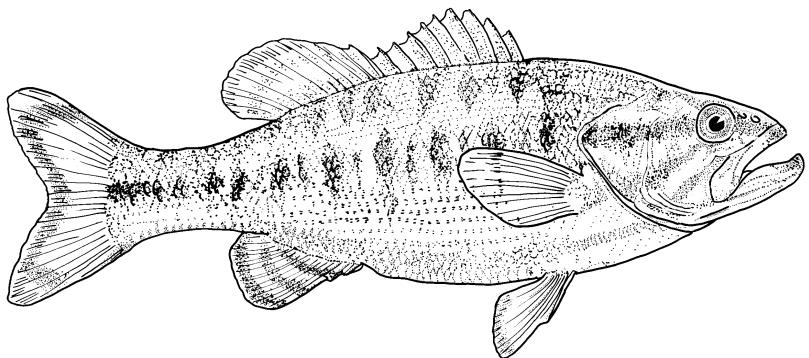
**Rod-and-reel**—A two piece fishing pole that includes a short rod and a reel with fishing line wound on it. The bait is cast into the water overhead or sidearm with this type of pole.

**Setting the hook**—The process of embedding a hook in a fish's mouth.

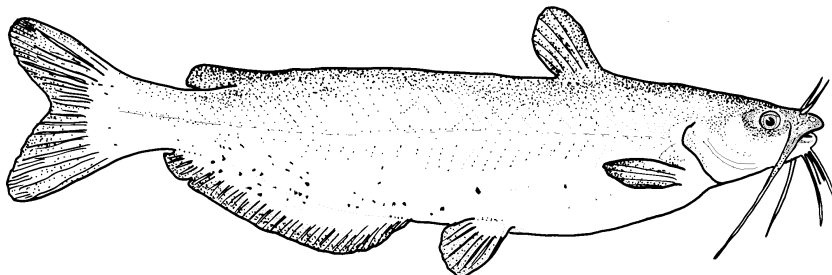
**Sinker**—A lead weight used to help hold the bait underwater.



Red-eared sunfish



Large-mouth bass



Channel catfish