

## WHITE SUCKER (*Catostomus commersoni*)



*Image by John Lyons*

**Other common names:** Common sucker, sucker.

**Identification:** Body is elongate with a rounded cross section throughout its length. The head is squarish in shape with a blunt snout. The mouth is aligned nearly horizontal and has thick fleshy lips covered with coarse papillae (bumps). The lip of the lower jaw extends back from the mouth as two enlarged, flattened lobes. Scales are large and number less than 74 along the lateral line. Coloration: Back is olive-brown to black; sides are brassy to silvery; underside is silvery-white to creamy-white. Young fish may have dark mottling and three dark oval blotches on the sides. Size: Adults attain large size, 10-18 inches.

**Habitat:** The species is found in a wide range of habitats including headwater streams, medium to large rivers, and lakes and ponds. The white sucker is widely distributed in Vermont.

**Bait use:** White suckers are an important bait fish in Vermont. Smaller fish are sold and used live much as shiners and minnows, while large individuals may be used for “cut bait” or fished dead as whole “sewn-on-bait.” They are hardy to transport and to maintain in holding tanks.