

# ROCK BASS

(*Ambloplites Rupestris*)

Oneida Lake Status:  
Common

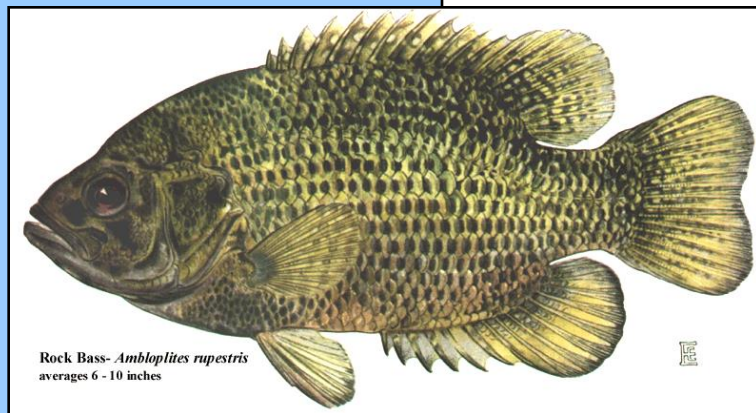
- A member of the sunfish family
- Nicknamed “Redeyes” by New York anglers
- Most abundant in rocky shallow waters



A rock bass netted in a gill net survey  
on Oneida Lake -CBFS

Rock bass are a common sunfish found in Oneida Lake. They generally are seen in the shallow, rocky areas, and even areas full of vegetation. It is not uncommon to see rock bass in areas near humans, such as docks. They are characterized by being brownish in color bright red eyes, and they can range from 6-10 inches in length.

The rock bass have similar eating habits to other sunfish, and generally eat most aquatic insects, crayfish, and small minnows and other fish.



A line drawing of a rock bass  
-NYDEC

Spawning for rock bass occurs early compared to other sunfish, in mid-May to mid-June. They have a tendency to build their nests in a variety of lake bottoms, including gravel, vegetation, and mud. These nests are kept well separated from other nests, just like the spawning of black bass.

Some anglers consider rock bass to be good food like other sunfish, but other bass anglers may consider them more of a nuisance than a fish they want to catch. Sometimes they are found with other types of bass, so anglers may find them to be bothersome while bass fishing, particularly in the case of smallmouth bass.

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