Name _____

Iowa Fish Identification

I. Identification Features

1. Match the fish fins with the correct definition and location.

1. E. Anal Fin — A. Used for upright balance; Located on "top" side of fishes
2. B. Caudal Fin — B. Used for forward movement; Located on the "back" of fishes
3. A. Dorsal Fin — C. Used for up and down movements; "Front" paired fins of fishes
4. C. Pectoral Fin — D. Used to turn, balance, & brake; "Back" paired fins of fishes
5. D. Pelvic Fin — E. Used to stabilize & steer; Located on bottom of fishes (not paired)

2. How are each of the following fish features typically utilized?

Body Shape
- Tall-Bodied : Adapted to slow-moving waters (bluegill) (laterally compressed)
- Slender : Adapted to moving waters (carp, suckers) (torpedo-shape)
- Flattened Bellies / Mouths : Bottom-dwelling (sturgeon)

Mouth
- Upturned (Superior) : Surface-feeding fish
- Terminal ("Normal") : Mid-water fish (perch, bass, trout)
- Suckers (Inferior) : Bottom feeding fish

Body Covering
- Scales : Protection (most fish)
- Bony Plates : Protection (shovelnose sturgeon)
- Small / Absent Scales : Mucus Covering → prevent infection (trout)

Body Coloring
- Stripes / Dark Coloration : Camouflaged to escape predators
- Fake "Eye-Spots" : Confuse predators
- Silvery Iridescence : Light reflection to confuse predators

II. Common Fish Families & Species

1. How many fish species are represented in the state of Iowa?

148 species

2. Identify characteristics and examples for members of each fish family.

1. Catfish Family *(Ictaluridae)*

Characteristics :

1. No scales
2. Eight fleshy whiskers (barbels)
3. Strong, sharp spines (dorsal/pectoral fins)
4. Adipose (fat) fin behind dorsal fin

Examples :

1. Catfish 2. Bullheads 3. Madtoms

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2. Minnow Family *(Crypinidae)*

Characteristics :

1. Scaleless head
2. Toothless jaws
3. Lacks appendages at base of pelvic fins
4. Single, soft dorsal fin (less than 10 rays)

Examples :

1. Common Carp 2. Bighead Carp 3. Silver Carp 4. White Amur 5. Goldfish

3. Perch Family *(Percidae)*

Characteristics :

1. Slender, elongated bodies
2. Large bone on gill cover (ends in flat spine)
3. Soft + spiny parts of dorsal fin (separated)
4. Soft rays; Stiff spines (No adipose fin)

Examples :

1. Walleye 2. Sauger (Darters) 3. Yellow Perch

4. Pike Family *(Esocidae)*

Characteristics :

1. Long, cylindrical bodies
2. Short dorsal fin (far back on body)
3. Flattened heads
4. Duckbill-shaped jaws (very sharp teeth)

Examples :

1. Northern Pike 2. Muskellunge 3. Grass Pickerel

5. Suckers Family *(Catostomidae)*

Characteristics :

1. Mouth (underside); Tipped with fleshy lips
2. Toothless jaws + scaleless heads
3. Forked caudal fin
4. Single, continuous, fleshy dorsal fin (10 or more dorsal fin rays)

Examples :

1. Buffalofish (Bigmouth, Smallmouth) 2. Redhorse 3. White Sucker

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6. Sunfish Family *(Centrarchidae)*

Characteristics :

1. At least one spine at front of dorsal fin (continuous)
2. Deeply compressed body (laterally)
3. Pelvic fins attached far forward (almost beneath pectoral fins)
4. 3 or more spines (front of anal fin) (Scales = rough edges)

Examples :

1. Bass (Smallmouth/Largemouth) 2. Bluegill 3. Crappie (Black/White) 4. Green Sunfish 5. Orange-Spotted Sunfish

7. Temperate Bass Family *(Percichthyidae)* - "Sea Bass"

Characteristics :

1. Spiny-rayed fish
2. Pelvic fins located far forward
3. Silvery (with dark horizontal stripes)
4. Two dorsal fins (1st = 10-13 spines / 2nd = 1 spine w/ 9-14 soft ra

Examples :

1. White Bass 2. Yellow Bass 3. Striped Bass (Hybrid)

8. Trout Family *(Salmonidae)*

Characteristics :

1. Only coldwater game fish in Iowa
2. Slender with tiny scales covering body
3. Hooked lower jaw
4. Adipose fin behind dorsal fin

Examples :

1. Brook Trout 2. Rainbow Trout 3. Brown Trout

III. Other Fish Families & Species

1. Identify characteristics for each type of primitive fish.

1. Bowfin *(Amiidae)*

Characteristics :

1. Dark olive body with cream-colored belly
2. Long dorsal fin (dark green)
3. Flattened head with large mouth (sharp teeth)

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2. Paddlefish *(Polyodontidae)*

Characteristics :

1. Slate-gray to gray-blue (fades lighter beneath)
2. Immensely elongated snout (long gill covers)
3. Scaleless body (shark-like mouth)

3. Gar *(Lepisostedidae)*

Characteristics :

1. Short snout + broad (Shortnose gar)
2. Snout long + narrow (Longnose gar)
3. Brown to olive with silver-white sides (Spotted black gar)

4. Sturgeon *(Acipenseridae)*

Characteristics : (Shovelnose sturgeon)

1. Drab olive color (lighter below)
2. Covered by heavy plate-like scales
3. Flattened snout

2. Identify characteristics for each type of miscellaneous fish.

1. Freshwater Drum *(Sciaenidae)*

Characteristics :

1. Head + body slope steeply (from snout to dorsal fin) (hump-backed look)
2. Gray back, silvery sides, + white belly
3. Two dorsal fins (1st = 8-9 spines / 2nd = 24-32 soft rays)

2. Gizzard Shad *(Clupeidae)*

Characteristics :

1. Typical herring body shape (deep body laterally compressed)
2. Silvery-blue back, silvery sides, + white belly
3. Rounded head (with possible dark shoulders spot)

3. Stickleback *(Gasterosteidae)*

Characteristics :

1. Scaleless (2-3 inches long)
2. Usually 5 unconnected spines (dorsal fin = 9-11 rays)
3. Anal fin (single spine with 9-10 rays)