

# Sauger

*Stizostedion canadense*



Sauger belong to the same family of fish as walleye and perch. Most anglers can readily identify perch, but distinguishing between sauger and walleye is more difficult. Both have a round body shape, two distinct fins on the back, strong sharp teeth, and colouring that shades from a dark olive on the back to a white belly.

There are, however, three major differences to look for between sauger and walleye. Walleye have a white tip on the bottom of the tail, no scales on the cheek, and a single dark blotch at the base of the spiny dorsal fin; sauger have no white on the tail, scaled cheeks, and rows of dark blotches on the dorsal fin.

Sauger prefer habitat somewhat more turbid than that of walleye. In southern Manitoba the two species live in many of the same waters, but sauger are generally not found north of the upper end of Lake Winnipeg. They may also use the same spawning shoals at slightly different times. Sauger have been known to spawn immediately after walleye when water temperatures are still only about 5°C.

The feeding habits of sauger are also similar to those of walleye, so you may catch one when you are fishing for the other. They feed on small fish and invertebrates over rocky gravel shallows or along sparsely weeded sandy bottoms. Both species will accept plugs, spoons, or spinners; and still fishing with minnows is successful.

Manitoba's sauger are generally around .5 to .7 kg, an excellent size for filets. Our record sauger caught in the Red River weighed almost 3 kg. Sauger, like walleye, are delicious. The flesh is so similar to that of walleye that commercially they are sold as one and the same.

Sauger bring commercial fishermen a good price. On Manitoba's large southern lakes they are an important source of income.

warm water species