

Identification of Walleye, Sauger, and Saugeye

The Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks has stocked sauger and saugeye (a hybrid of the walleye and the sauger) in federal reservoirs where walleye have not flourished. The sauger is native to large rivers like the Kansas and Missouri. Both sauger and saugeye are better adapted to high flow and turbid water than the walleye; saugeye establish fishable populations below impoundments when flushed. Saugeye have also been stocked as an additional predator in small lakes with stunted crappie.

It is important that anglers be able to identify what type of perch (the family of fishes that includes walleye and sauger) they catch because length limits on walleye, sauger and saugeye can differ in a given body of water. The information below identifies key characteristics needed to identify these three fish.

WALLEYE

spiny dorsal fin with indistinct streaks or blotches

dark blotch at rear base of spiny dorsal fin

cheeks with few scales (smooth)

blotches on sides indistinct and not extending far below the lateral line

SAUGER

spiny dorsal fin with distinct circular spots

no blotch at rear base of spiny dorsal fin

cheeks with few scales (rough)

blotches on sides dark, distinct and extending below the lateral line

SAUGEYE (hybrid)

spiny dorsal fin with distinct streaks often with one or two rows of spots at base

dark blotch at rear base of spiny dorsal fin

cheeks with scales (rough)

blotches on sides dark, distinct and extending below the lateral line

Artwork by Joseph R. Tomelleri

