TWO BLACK BASS NEW TO TENNESSEE

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Two species of black bass not previously reported from Tennessee were collected from the Conasauga River system in Polk County during the summer of 1950. They were the Alabama spotted black bass, *Micropterus punctulatus henshalli* (Hubbs and Bailey) and the redeye black bass, *Micropterus coosae* (Hubbs and Bailey). Both species are considered common in the Alabama-Coosa River system, but naturally are confined to the Conasauga drainage in Tennessee. The Conasauga River system in southeastern Tennessee is limited to a small area in Polk and Bradley counties and is the only drainage in Tennessee that flows directly into the Gulf of Mexico. Because of this peculiarity, one might expect a different fish fauna in these waters than in the rest of the state.

While fishing in the Conasauga River on May 6, 1950, the senior author caught an Alabama spotted bass weighing about one pound (King, 1950). This fish is a southern subspecies of the spotted black bass, *Micropterus punctulatus,* and would not be expected to occur in any other drainage in Tennessee. There are no previous records of this bass having been taken in the state. The Alabama spotted bass has the streamlined body of the smallmouth, *Micropterus dolomieu* (Lacepede), and the markings of the spotted bass. "There is a small patch of teeth on the tongue indicating affinity to the spotted bass. There is a pronounced dark lateral stripe composed of triangular and diamond shaped figures which become confluent on the posterior half of the body. A large dark blotch at the base of the tail fin and another at the posterior margin of the gill cover are noticeable. Three dark streaks radiate from the eye. The back is bronze-green with irregular blotches while below the lateral line the body is plain and light except for about ten rows of clearly formed dots on either side. The dorsal fin has a moderate notch separating the spinous and soft rayed portions. There are about seventy-five scales along the lateral line" (King, 1950).

A good series of the second species, the redeye black bass, was taken by State fish biologists, including the junior author, from Sheeds Creek, a tributary of the Conasauga River, August 2, 1950. Sheeds Creek is a small stream about six miles in length and is characterized by a series of many shallow pools with sandy bottoms. The water temperature was 68° F. on the day of sampling. A three-quarter mile sample of Sheeds Creek produced 88 specimens of the species but undoubtedly many small bass were overlooked during the collection of the fish. The largest bass was 10.35 inches in total length and weighed 0.5 pounds. The redeye is the smallest of the black basses, yet for its length it is quite heavy. The redeye black bass from Sheeds Creek is dark but brilliantly colored with a bright red eye.

The black is bronze-purple, with only slight indications of black or bluish spotches below the lateral line. The black spot found at the base of the tail on the Alabama spotted bass is scarcely noticeable in the adult redeye, but the opercular spot is well developed in both species. Of the 69 bass specimens inspected for teeth on the tongue, 49 had teeth or rudimentary teeth while 20 had none.

In comparing habitat requirements, it appears that the Alabama spotted bass thrives best in the larger streams whereas the redeye bass does best in the smaller streams. Both fish provide excellent food and are very game on sport fishing tackle.

It is very interesting that Sheeds Creek is one of the smallest streams in Tennessee known to have a self-sustaining bass population. The redeye black bass may offer promise in stocking small warm water streams in Tennessee that are unsuited for the northern smallmouth or for any variety of trout.

Technical description of the two fishes is given by Hubbs and Bailey (1940) in their revision of the black basses.

References Cited

King, Willis. 1950. Fish New to Tennessee is Discovered. *The Tennessee Conservationist*, July, 1950, p. 18.

Hubbs, Carl L., and Reeve M. Bailey. 1940. A Revision of the Black Basses *(Micropterus and Huro)* with Descriptions of Four New Forms. *Misc. Pub Mus.* or *Zool., Uni. of Mich.*, No. 48, p. 1-51, 6 plates, 1 distribution map.

THE HAYSCENTEDFERN IN TENNESSEE

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HAYSCENTEDFERN

Dennstaedtia punctilobula (Michx.) Moore
(*Dicksonia punctilobu'a* (Michx.) Gray, of *Gray's Manual,* 7th ed.)

(Continued from the October, 1950, number)

The pinnules are usually cut into oblong, obtuse lobes, which com-