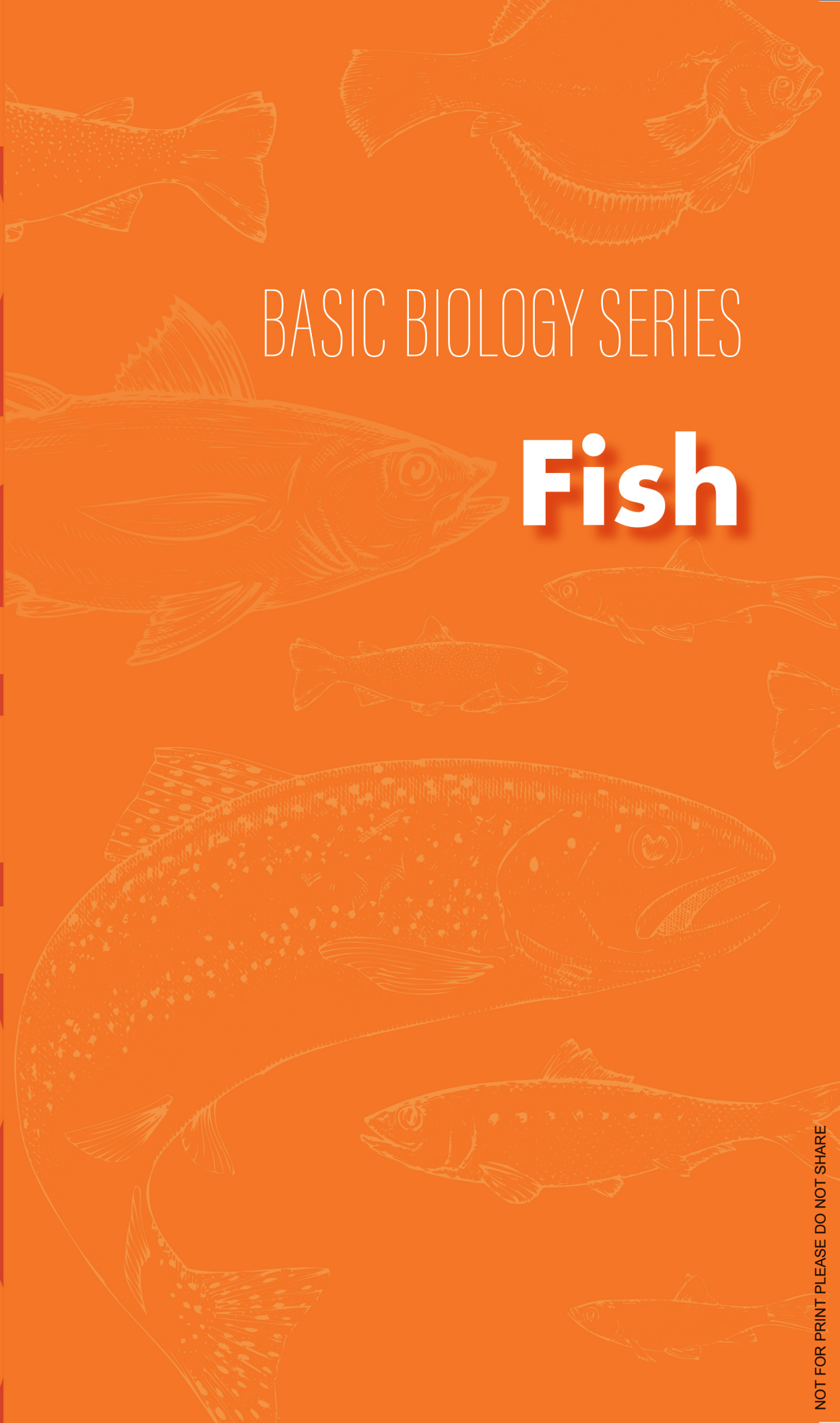


SCIENCE

BASIC BIOLOGY SERIES

Fish



Basic Biology Series
Fish



Published by

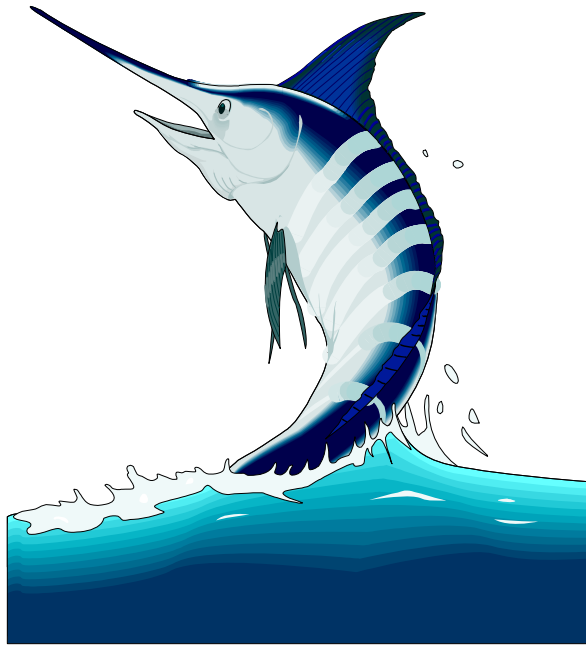
Heron Books™

HOW ALL FISH ARE ALIKE

Fish are very special animals. Fish are not the only animals that live in the water, but of all the water animals fish are the most expert swimmers. Many of the ways that fish are alike have something to do with why they are such good swimmers.

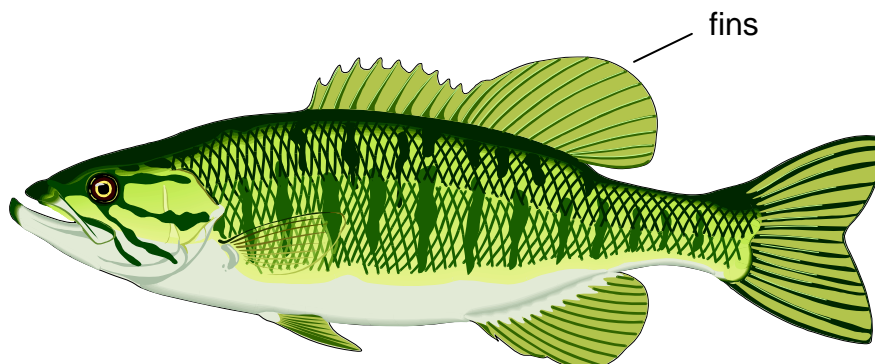
Fish are alike in these important ways:

1. All fish live in water.

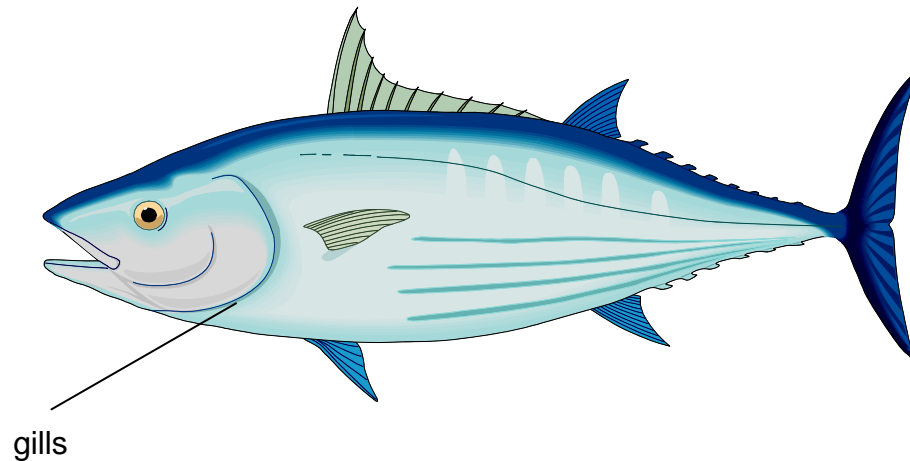


Most fish can live for only a few minutes out of water.

2. All fish have fins. Fins are what fish use to push their bodies through the water or to steer with.

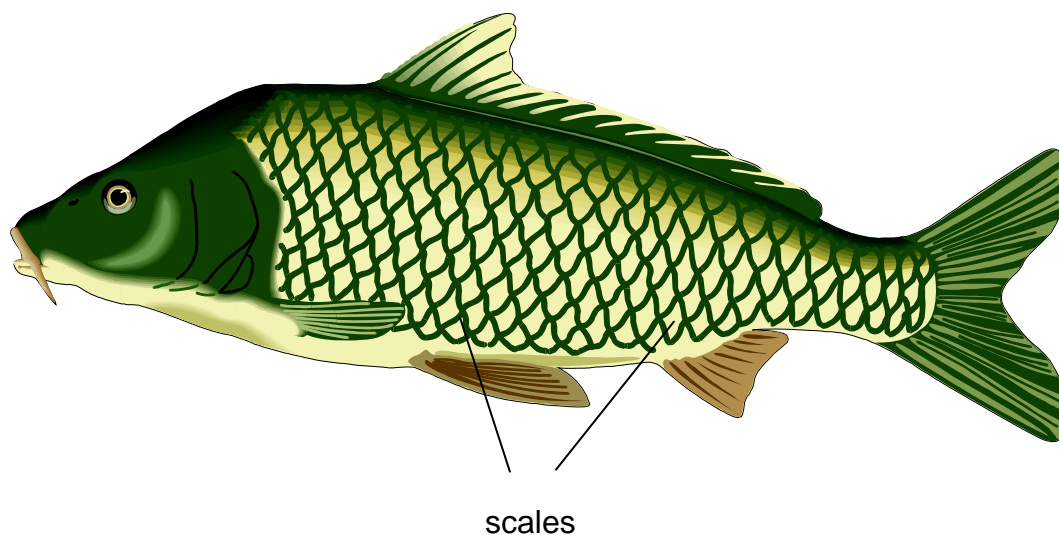


3. All fish have gills. Gills are part of a fish's body right behind its head. Gills look like slits from the outside.



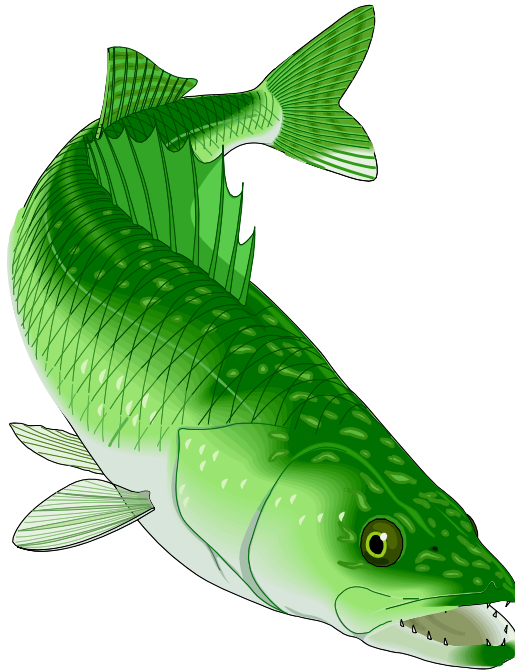
Gills in fish have the same purpose as lungs in people. Fish use these gills to breathe tiny parts of air that are in the water. The fish take in water through their mouths and let it out through their gill slits. When the water goes by their gills the air that is in it gets picked up by the gills and taken into the fish's blood. When a fish swims faster, more water goes into its mouth and out through its gills, so it gets more air when it is working harder.

4. Most fish have scales on their bodies. Scales are little sheets of thin stiff material.



Scales cover and protect a fish's body. Each row of scales laps over the one next to it, from back to front, kind of like shingles on the roof of a house. If you feel a fish's scales, you will notice that they feel smooth if you rub from front to back, but rough if you rub from back to front. Scales help the fish move smoothly forward through the water.

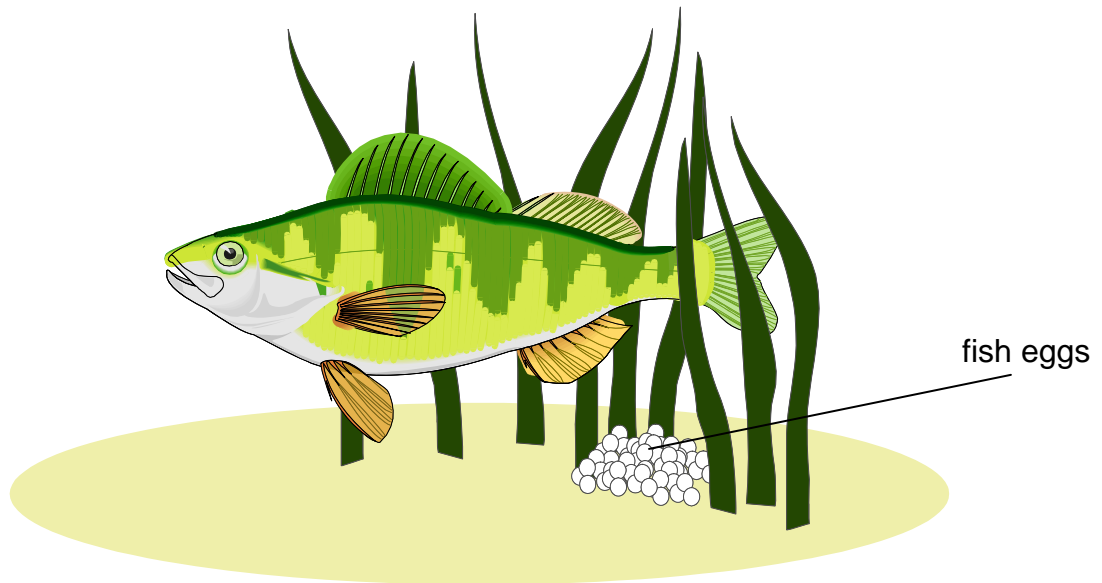
5. Most fish have tapered bodies and strong tails. Their bodies are shaped so they can move through the water easily. Shapes like this are called **streamlined**. The fish with the most streamlined bodies and the strongest tails are generally the fastest swimmers.



If an animal has fins, gills, and scales and lives in water, it is a fish.

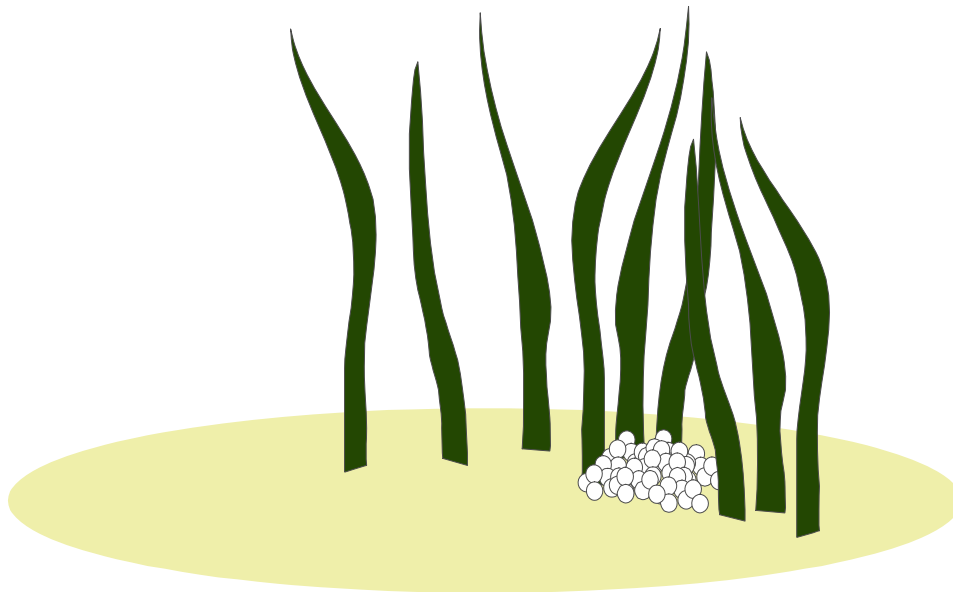
THE LIFE OF A FISH

The life of a fish starts in an egg. Mother fish lay their eggs in the weeds and on rocks under water. They lay many, many eggs. Some fish lay over a thousand eggs at one time.

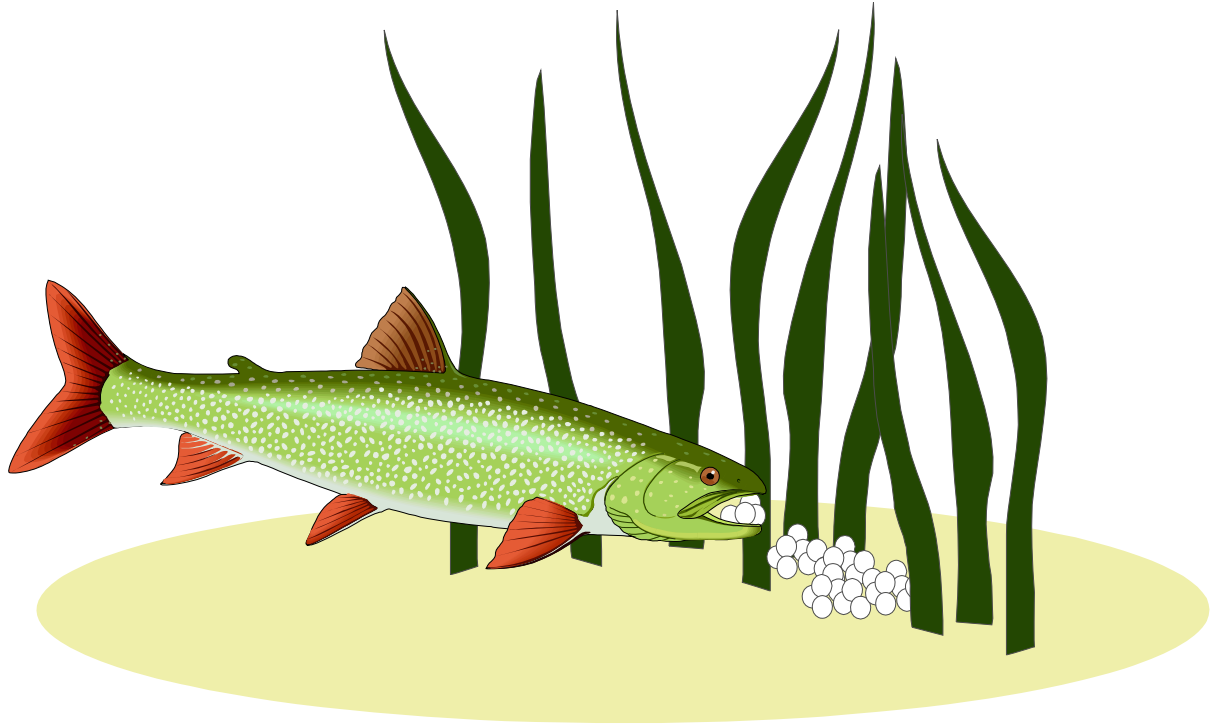


With some kinds of fish the father fish or the mother fish guards the eggs from other fish. In one kind of fish the eggs are kept safe in the *mouth* of the father fish!

But with most kinds of fish the mother and father fish either just leave the eggs or they hide the eggs and then leave them.



Often many of the eggs get eaten by other fish. But there are usually some eggs left to hatch.



After several days the baby fish hatch out of the eggs. They can swim and eat as soon as they are born.

