



Marketing Baitfish in Kentucky
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Low-tech Production Management

- Golden shiners are a popular baitfish. They can be grown in a pond using very low-tech methods.
- Yearling golden shiners can be used as brood fish, which are kept in ponds at a 20-40 lb/ac density.
- To allow the fish to spawn, lower pond level in mid-March to early July, plant ryegrass around the pond edges and let the grass grow. Refill the pond such that the grass is submerged. The grass forms the necessary substrate for the fish to spawn.
- The fish will spawn naturally when water temperature is at least 70 F. Spawning stops when water temperature is 85 F. The juvenile fish and adult fish stay in the same pond.
- The ponds must be properly fertilized, and appropriate water quality must be maintained.
- The fish could be fed a 28% crude protein floating catfish diet.
 - Feed young fish crumbles at 2-5 lb/ac/day.
 - At 6-weeks age switch to feeding pellets at 5 lb/ac/day, gradually increasing to 10-15 lb/ac/day.
- Baitfish can be harvested between 6-18 months age or kept in ponds until a suitable market is found.
- Spawning and growout methods vary for different baitfish species. For additional information, consult

http://www.agecon.msstate.edu/Aquaculture/pubs/Baitfish_Profile.pdf.



Marketing Information

- In June 2007, a live baitfish survey was given to 94 bait retailers out of which 47 (50%) provided information about their business.
 - Retailers that completed the survey were located in 31 counties, out of a total of 120 Kentucky counties.
 - The counties surveyed covered a wide region of the state and included popular sport fishing resort areas such as Lake Cumberland and Land Between the Lakes.
- Among the bait shops surveyed, 74.5% sold minnows, 51.1% sold golden shiners, 19.2% goldfish, and 19.2% sold crayfish.
- Other fish species sold in the retail bait shops included channel catfish, shad, suckers, chub, and common carp.
- Minnow sizes sold were mostly Tiny (1-1.5 inch) and Small (2-3 inch) fish.
 - However, mostly Small and Medium (4-5 inch) size golden shiners, goldfish, and crayfish were sold.
 - Catfish of 4-5 inches, shad of 4-5 inches, and carp of 4-5 inch sizes were sold.
 - Only Large 6 inch suckers were sold.
 - Only Tiny 1-1.5 inch chubs were sold.
- Average selling prices: minnows (\$1.64/doz), golden shiners (\$4.33/doz), goldfish (\$10.89/doz), and crayfish (\$6.52/doz).
 - The average selling prices for Tiny, Small, and Medium minnows were \$.82/doz, \$1.28/doz and \$2.00/doz, respectively.
 - The average selling prices for Tiny, Small, and Medium golden shiners were \$.95/doz \$2.45/doz, and \$3.80/doz, respectively.
- 30% and 32% retailers reported a high demand for baitfish during March to November and March to May, respectively.

Do Bait Shops want to buy Baitfish from Local Farmers in Kentucky?

- 31% of the retailers indicated that out-of-state suppliers could not always meet the demand of baitfish.
- Many bait shops desired to buy fish such as rosy red minnows, large minnows (6" or bigger), large golden shiners, and catfish of any size from Kentucky farmers.
- To succeed in selling baitfish, farmers must have:
 - 1). Consistent product supply.
 - 2). Live hauling ability,
 - 3). Live in proximity to bait shop.

Acknowledgements

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References

Engle, C. and N. Stone. Industry Profile: The Aquaculture of Baitfish.
http://www.agecon.msstate.edu/Aquaculture/pubs/Baitfish_Profile.pdf.

Pennsylvania Fishes. Published by Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission.
<http://www.fish.state.pa.us/pafish/fishhtmls/chapindx.htm>¹.





Golden Shiner



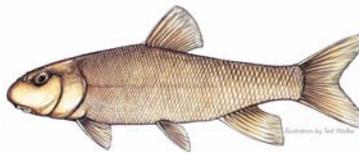
Hornyhead Chub



Fathead Minnow



Alewife



White sucker



Redhorse sucker

Figure 1. Some types of fishes used as baitfish in Kentucky¹.