

FRESHWATER DRUM

(Family: *Sciaenidae*)

Oneida Lake Status:
Common



A Freshwater Drum caught in June 2013 on Oneida Lake -CBFS

- Also known as the “sheepshead “
- Can grow to be over 20 inches long
- Known for large “otolith” or ear bones

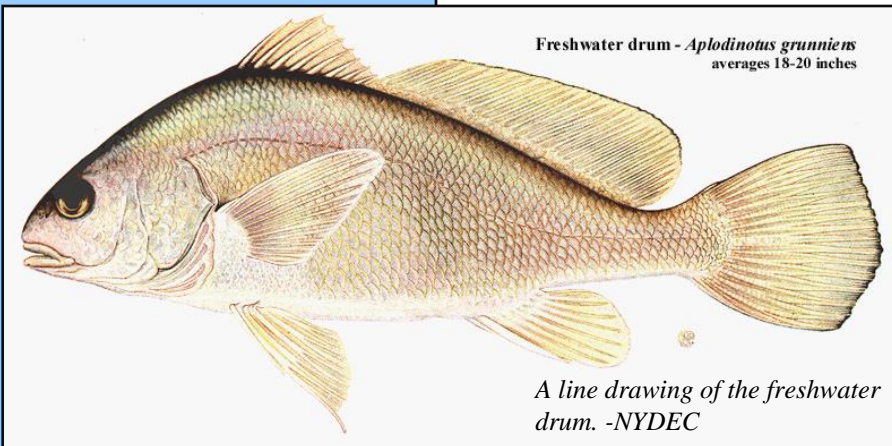
The freshwater drum or sheepshead is characterized by its large size; it can grow to be over 20 inches long and over 10 lbs. in weight. They have a blunt head, and some say that have a humpback appearance that makes them distinct. They live in big rivers and lakes, such as Oneida Lake. They also prefer clear water, although they can adapt to live in turbidity.



A Freshwater Drum caught in June 2013 on Oneida Lake -CBFS

These fish are called the freshwater drum because they use their muscles around their swim bladder to create a drumming sound.

They also have strong muscles in their head and small round teeth that specialize in grinding up their favorite foods of freshwater snails, clams, crayfish, and mussels.



Freshwater drum - *Aplodinotus grunniens*
averages 18-20 inches

A line drawing of the freshwater drum. -NYDEC

In terms of spawning, freshwater drum are unique because they are the only freshwater fish that have planktonic eggs (eggs that float and move with the currents of the water). This spawning season is long, but it has never been observed in the wild.

Freshwater drum are known for their large otolith bones (inner ear bones). These bones form a curved “L” on one side of them, and they are often picked up along the beach for good luck as souvenir.

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