



# blueback herring

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<b>Common Name</b>	blueback herring
<b>Genus &amp; Species</b>	<i>Alosa aestivalis</i>
<b>Family</b>	Clupeidae (herrings and shads)
<b>Order</b>	Clupeiformes (herrings, shads, anchovies, sardines)
<b>Class</b>	Actinopterygii (ray-finned fishes)

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**Diagnosis:** Blueback herring are characterized by a blue to blue-green dorsal area with a silver lateral area. This species has a small, dark spot on the operculum and light green or yellow fins. Scales in lateral series are 46-54, dorsal fin rays are 15-20 and anal fin rays are 15-21. Bluebacks have teeth on lower jaw and have a fairly small eye. There are usually 44-50 rakers on the lower limb of 1<sup>st</sup> gill arch. Maximum length is 40cm.

**Ecology:** Blueback herring are anadromous and spawn in swift flowing, deeper stretches of rivers and streams with associated hard substrate and in slower flowing tributaries and flooded low lying areas adjacent to main streams with soft substrates and detritus. Fecundity for this species is 45,000 to 350,000 eggs. Food sources are similar to Alewife as these 2 species are sympatric in regards to many life history requirements.



**Habitat & Distribution:** The range of the blueback herring is the Atlantic Coast from Cape Breton, Nova Scotia to the St. Johns River, Florida. This species has been introduced into Virginia reservoirs. Dams have reduced freshwater range and abundance. Bluebacks prefer current over rocky bottoms.

**Status:** Currently, blueback herring are found in Lake Ontario. This discovery was recent in 1995. It has not been determined if the species is established in Lake Ontario. However, if the species does become established, it will have access to the other lakes via canals. This will then lead to access to the Mississippi River through other man-made canals. There is a possibility that this species could spread rapidly.

**USGS Fact Sheet:** <http://nas.er.usgs.gov/queries/factsheet.aspx?SpeciesID=488>