Freshwater Fishes: Everglades and Ponds

American Eel – Found in freshwaters along the eastern seaboard, eels are predators that feed on insects, crustaceans, mollusks and some fish. Although often associated with decaying food, they prefer live food.

Atlantic Sturgeon – A highly endangered species, this large fish is now rare in the Florida Gulf where it once was common. Although it lives its adult life in the ocean, it returns to freshwater to spawn. A bottom-feeder, the sturgeon feeds primarily on mollusks, which it crushes in its powerful mouth.

Blue-spotted Sunfish – Eats small fish and invertebrates of many kinds.

Bowfin - About 80 percent of their diet consists of fish, with crayfish being the second most dominant food item. They stalk their prey using their senses of smell and sight.

Channel Catfish - Feeds primarily at night using taste buds in the sensitive barbels and throughout the skin to locate prey. Their major foods are aquatic insects, crayfish, mollusks, crustaceans and smaller fishes. Small cats eat mostly invertebrates, but larger ones may eat fish. Contrary to popular belief, carrion (dead animal flesh) is not their normal food.

Florida Gar - Young fish feed on zooplankton, insect larvae and small fish. Adults primarily feed on fish, shrimp and crayfish.

Largemouth Bass - The diet of Largemouth Bass changes with its size. Young fish feed on microscopic animals (zooplankton) and small crustaceans such as grass shrimp and crayfish. Fingerling bass feed on insects, crayfish, and small fishes. Adult bass will eat whatever is available, including fish, crayfish, crabs, frogs, salamanders, snakes, mice, turtles and even birds. If it fits in the mouth and can be caught, the Largemouth Bass will eat it!

Mosquito Fish – Eats primarily insect larvae and other very small invertebrates.

Mullet, Fantail - The diet of the mullet includes mussels, insect larvae, plankton, worms, snails and other crustaceans. Some fresh water species are known to prey on other fish such as bass, walleye and pike.

Peacock Bass – This exotic fish is actually a cichlid, and not a true bass. It feeds almost exclusively on fish, and tends to use great speed to capture prey. The Peacock Bass typically feeds only during daylight hours. Although this fish has helped reduce the number of undesirable exotic fishes (especially the spotted tilapia), it also has caused problems by feeding on the young of ecologically important native fishes.

Redfin Pickerel – Small fish make up most of their diet, but they also eat aquatic insects and various other invertebrates.

Skipjack Herring - Their name derives from the fact that schools of these fish will jump out of the water skipping across the surface, especially at dawn and dusk, in pursuit of small minnows and insect larvae.

Tilapia - Feed primarily on plankton and small organisms living in or on bottom detritus.

Warmouth - Warmouths are carnivorous. Crayfish, shrimp, insects and small fishes make up the bulk of its diet.