

## Behaviors of Fish Predators in Lake Tahoe

**Ambush Predators** can be found in areas of high plant density (i.e. warm shallow waters in the Tahoe Keys). These predators will hide amongst the thick mass of plants and make quick, darting advancements toward their prey. They are swift and agile in their surprise attack tactics. Lake Tahoe examples include Largemouth Bass and Bluegill who typically feed on insects, zooplankton, worms, and small fish.



Bluegill

Bluegill (*Lepomis macrochirus*) can effectively exploit the water column because they have a small protrusible mouth, capable of extension, allowing them to suck in small prey with a current of water. Their short, laterally compressed body form provides quickness and economy in maneuvering the body.



Largemouth Bass

The Largemouth Bass (*Micropterus salmoides*), as its name would indicate, has a larger mouth. This enlarged opening enables the catch and consumption of larger prey but severely compromises its ability to feed on small prey. The fusiform body shape allows increased speed for capturing large prey.

**Active/Visual Predators:** Active predators actively swim around looking for food, and therefore they heavily rely on vision and the clarity of their environment. They are fierce predators and opportunistic feeders, eating almost any prey item in their environment.



Lahontan Cutthroat Trout

The Lahontan Cutthroat Trout (*Oncorhynchus clarkii henshawi*) as an opportunistic feeder will have a varied diet, consuming almost anything including smaller fish as well as terrestrial and aquatic insects.

**Bottom Feeders:** Bottom feeders have a mouth opening orientated downward which allows them to easily feed off the bottom of the lake.



Lahontan Redside



Lahontan Speckled Dace

Lahontan Redsides (*Richardsonius egregius*) and Lahontan Speckled Dace (*Rhinichthys osculus robustus*) which are both considered bottom feeders based on their physiology. In a stream or river environment they consume algae and aquatic insects. However, in the open waters of Lake Tahoe these fish, despite their morphology, become opportunistic feeders eating zooplankton and drifting algae.