



Green Heron



## RIVER OF THE FALLING BANKS



▶ **The Monongahela River**, flows north 128 miles from Fairmont, WV, to Pittsburgh, PA, where it meets the Allegheny River to form the Ohio River.

Native Americans named the river "Monongahela," which means "river with the crumbling or falling banks." Locally called the Mon, this narrow river valley is home to black bear, beaver, white-tailed deer, fox, groundhog, muskrat, and raccoon. Bald eagle, osprey, many species of waterfowl, and blue and green heron also frequent the river.

In its original natural state, the river was shallow and had a series of pools and rapids that sometimes dried out in the summer. Nine locks and dams were built in the late 1800s, creating a deep, navigable "roadway" for towboats with coal-laden barges. Although coal has helped the Nation grow, water quality deteriorated in the Mon because of acid mine drainage from mines along the river and its tributaries. Contaminants from treated acid mine drainage continue to impact water quality while gas well drilling is a new threat. These, as well as many other human activities, also cause erosion and sedimentation which affects aquatic life and drinking water.



▶ **The American paddlefish, *Polyodon spathula***, is one of the largest freshwater fish in North America and commonly reaches 5 feet or more in length.



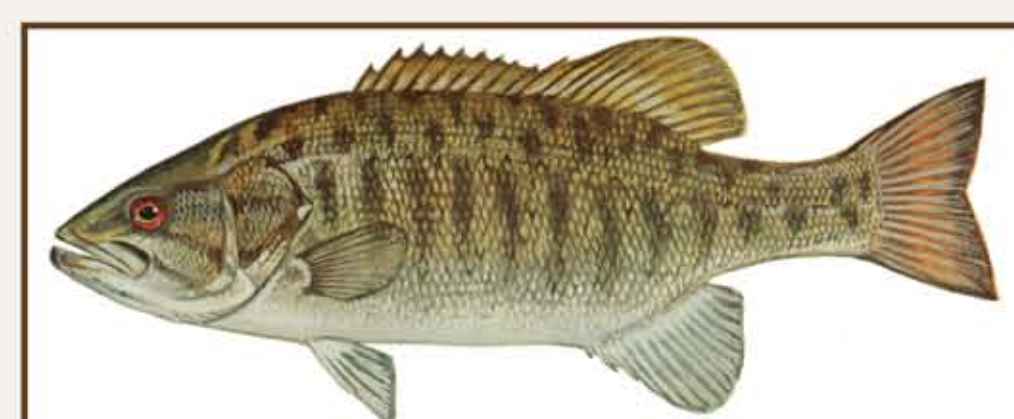
▶ **Carp**



▶ **Largemouth Bass**



▶ **Sauger**



▶ **Smallmouth Bass**

### River in Recovery

Since the enactment of the Clean Water Act, the river's fish population and species numbers have dramatically increased. Now more than 100 species of fish populate the Mon, and fishing is a common activity. Largemouth and smallmouth bass, white bass, carp, catfish, drum, musky, sauger, sunfish, and walleye are abundant.

In the 1990's, Paddlefish were reintroduced to the Monongahela River where it had not been seen since the 1800s. Paddlefish populations had been wiped out due to pollution, sedimentation, and the construction of dams that blocked their migration routes.

Upper Mon Water Trail Maps are available at the Greater Morgantown Convention and Visitors Bureau: 1-800-458-7373.



[www.montrails.org](http://www.montrails.org)



[www.wvdnr.gov](http://www.wvdnr.gov)

