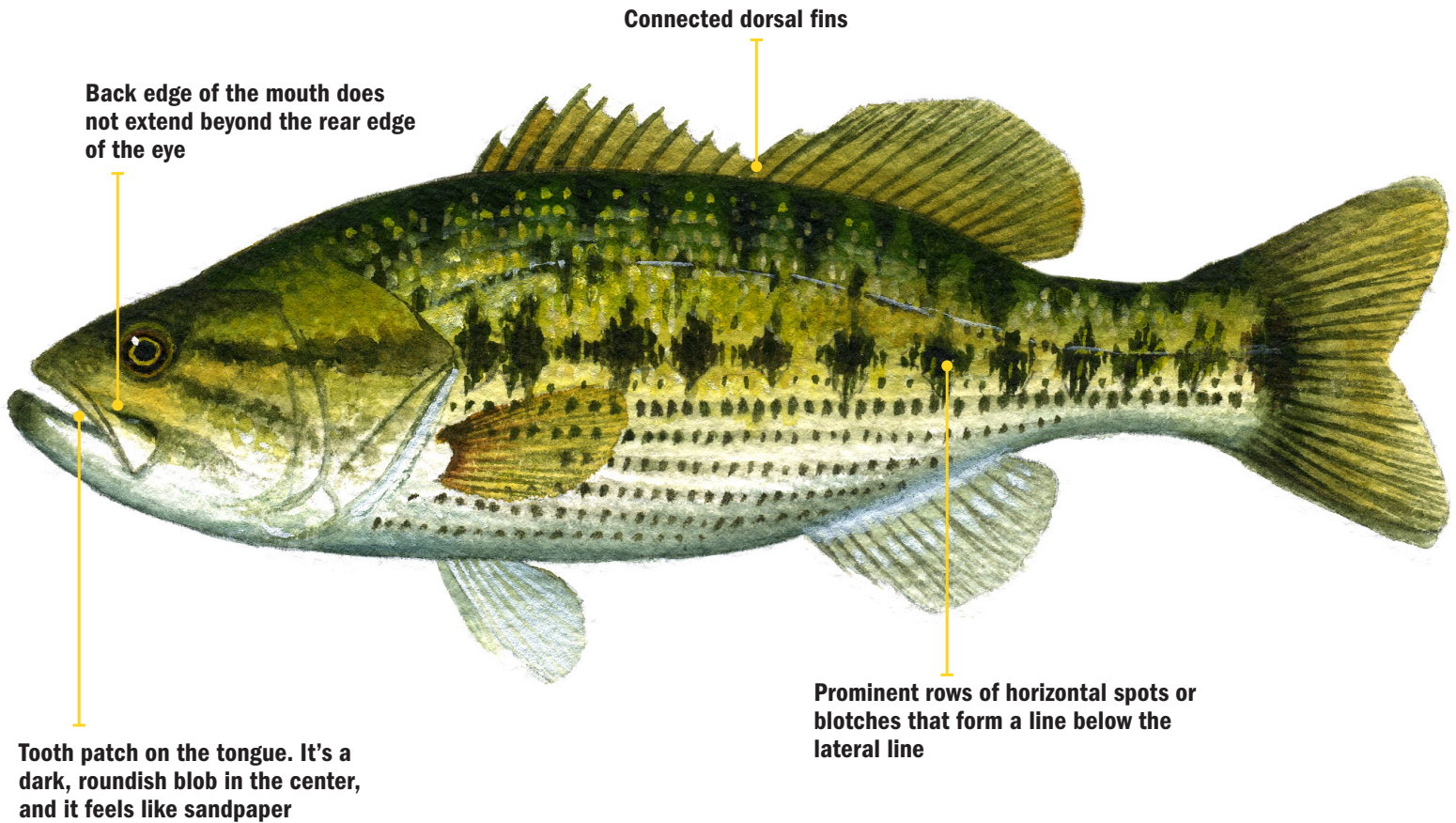


# How To Identify Spotted Bass



Steve Sammons, research fellow at Auburn University, has worked with spotted bass for nearly 15 years. His work began in Tennessee and has taken him to the epicenter of spotted bass, Alabama's Coosa River system.

Spots interbreed so readily with other bass that identifying a pure-strain spot can be daunting. Sammons says there are several defining characteristics to look for when inspecting your catch.

“At first glance, they can look like a largemouth because of their greenish hue; however, you can really diagnose what you've got by looking at its fins, coloration and tongue.

“Spots have very prominent rows of horizontal spots or blotches that form a line below the lateral line. Their dorsal fins are connected — like a smallmouth's — whereas the largemouth's dorsals are separate. The dead giveaway is the tooth patch on the tongue. It's a dark, roundish blob in the center, and it feels like sandpaper,” he says.

Another giveaway is that the mouth of a spotted bass extends to about the middle of the eye. A largemouth's mouth usually extends beyond the back of the eye.