

# Eurasian Ruffe

*Scardinius erythrophthalmus*



Photo by U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service



## What is it and Why is it a Problem?

The Eurasian Ruffe is a versatile fish in the Perch family that is capable of living in a range of nutrient conditions, depths, temperatures and even in brackish water. They compete with native fish species, especially native Perch, for food and habitat, and also have very few natural predators since their hard spines on their dorsal fins make them an unappealing meal. In addition, they eat the eggs of sportfish and can dominate over native populations of fish due to their fast growth and reproduction rates. Although the Eurasian Ruffe is currently only found around Lake Huron and Lake Superior, it has good potential to spread to other Great Lakes and inland lakes in The Land Between if careful precautions are not taken.



## What Does it Look Like?

- Eurasian Ruffe can look similar to native juvenile Walleye, Trout Perch or Yellow Perch but do not have dark vertical stripes like Yellow Perch, nor the separated front and back dorsal fins like Yellow Perch and Walleye have (front and back dorsal fins are fused together)
- Body is less than 20 cm long and olive-brown with pale-coloured sides
- Eyes appear glassy
- Mouth is down-turned
- Front dorsal fin has 11-16 rigid, sharp spines with dark spotting in between them whereas the second dorsal fin has flexible, soft rays
- Anal fins and gill covers have sharp spines
- Head has no scales



## How Can it be Managed?

- Help prevent the spread of this invasive species to The Land Between by reporting sightings of any invasive species online through [EDDMapS Ontario](#), a web-based mapping system which also has an app, or through the [Invasive Species in Ontario](#) project on [iNaturalist.org](#).
- Inspect your boat, trailer and fishing gear before leaving a fishing spot and before heading to a new fishing spot to remove any mud, plant fragments and animals. Dispose of any plant and animal matter in the garbage. Refer to the [OMNRF's Boater's Action Plan](#) for more information on cleaning your boat and gear.
- Release water from your motor, live well, bilge and transom wells once on land.
- Do not release aquarium or pond contents into water bodies. Oftentimes invasive aquatic animals end up reaching water bodies when people dispose of them in lakes and rivers.

## References

[Great Lakes Nonindigenous Species Information System](#), produced by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

[Ontario Invading Species Awareness Program](#), developed by the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry (MNRF), and the Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters (OFAH).