

# Goldfish

*Carassius auratus*



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

Goldfish are an invasive species of fish that have become a problem in many lakes, ponds and streams due to people releasing their unwanted aquarium contents. They are capable of surviving through temperature fluctuations and in waters with low dissolved oxygen content, meaning they can outcompete many native species, especially in degraded or heavily disturbed waters. These aquarium-escapers feed on native snails, small insects, aquatic plants, fish eggs and larvae, thus putting these native populations at risk and reducing biodiversity. They also stir up mud and sediment during feeding which can increase the turbidity (cloudiness) of the water and reduce the amount of sunlight penetrating native plants. Finally, they can carry a herpesvirus that can be transferred to native fish populations.



## How Can it be Managed?

- Report 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](#).
- Learn how to identify it so you can avoid accidentally spreading it with your fishing gear and equipment. 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.
- If you happen to catch a Goldfish, you must destroy it to prevent further growth and reproduction - do not put it back into the water.
- 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.



## What Does it Look Like?

- Grow to be around 12 - 22 cm long (sometimes up to 40 cm long)
- Bodies are elongated and range from bright orange to olive green or white or gray
- Head and eyes are large compared to the body size
- Dorsal fin is long with a single stout spine and serrated trailing edge
- Anal fin is short with a single serrated spine and has a deep forked shape
- Mouth is small with no barbels
- May look similar to the Common Carp, but does not have barbels like the Carp does

## 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).



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