

Round Goby

Bythotrephes longimanus



What is it and Why is it a Problem?

The Round Goby is a bottom-dwelling fish that invades lakes with sandy and rocky bottoms and can reach densities of up to 100 fish/ sq. m. It feeds on insects and other aquatic organisms, such as invasive Zebra Mussels as well as small native fish (Mottled Sculpin and Logperch), at-risk native species (Northern Madtom, Eastern Sand Darter, and species of freshwater mussels), and fish eggs. They are aggressive feeders and spawn multiple times a year, making them outcompete other lake organisms for food and habitat. Additionally, they can become infected with a toxin, called botulism type-E, from eating infected Zebra Mussels which causes outbreaks and die-offs in fish and fish-eating birds.



What Does it Look Like?

- First dorsal fin has a prominent black spot
- Pelvic fin is fused and scallop-shaped
- Body is fully scaled, brownish-olive with dark brown spots (reproducing males have almost completely black body and fins)
- Nostril tubes stop before the upper lip



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 animal and plant 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 Round Goby, you must destroy it to prevent further growth and reproduction - do not put it back into the water.
- Do not use Round Goby as bait - it is illegal to possess Round Goby.
- Do not release live bait into the water body - it is illegal to release live baitfish. They may also carry invasive species in their containers from other water bodies that you cannot see. Instead, you can freeze or salt your live bait to save for another use. If you are not going to use it again, you can throw it in the garbage.
- 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 (MNR), and the Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters (OFAH).



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