

Native or Invasive?

Native and Invasive Fish of Eastern Lake Ontario

Invasive fishes compete with native fish species for habitat and resources, as well as create changes in food web dynamics. To protect the diversity of native fishes in New York's waters, you can become aware of the native species that make our area unique and be on the lookout for the aquatic invaders that could threaten them. Read on for a sampling of our native fishes, as well as some invasives to recognize.

Right: Sport fishing is a popular pastime in the Eastern Lake Ontario region.

Photo: Ray Hrynyk



Mottled Sculpin *Cottus bairdii*



Photo: Andrew Kost

Native fish

- Has two separate, distinct pelvic fins
- Grows no larger than five inches
- Dwells among the rocks on the bottoms of cool rivers, lakes and streams
- Important prey fish for yellow perch, trout, and northern pike

Round Goby *Apollonia melanostoma*



Photo: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Invasive fish

- Originally from the Black Sea
- Distinct fused pelvic fins
- Aggressive predators and nest guarders
- Spawn multiple times a year

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Yellow Perch *Perca flavescens*



Photo: NYS Dept. of Environmental Conservation

Native fish

Popular sport fish
Can live as long as nine years
Has two separate dorsal fins
Prefers habitat with submerged vegetation

Eurasian Ruffe *Gymnocephalus cernuus*



Photo: Gary Cholwek

Invasive fish

Lacks scales on its head
Reproduces multiple times a year, and matures faster than native species
Can adapt to a greater variety of habitat types than native species
Currently found in the Upper Great Lakes, but not known to occur in Eastern Lake Ontario as of mid-September 2011

Log Perch *Percina caprodes*



Photo: Andrew Kost

Native fish

Prefers clear, swift water with rocky or sandy substrate
Important prey fish for northern pike and small and large mouth bass
Eats invertebrates that it finds by flipping over rocks with its snout
Reaches a maximum size of 7 inches

Brook Stickleback *Culaea inconstans*



Photo: Andrew Kost

Native fish

Maximum size around 2 inches
Occupies clear, cool waters
Usually feeds at dawn and twilight
Spines help protect from some predators

If you spot what you think may be an invasive species, please contact:

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