

Ruffe WATCH

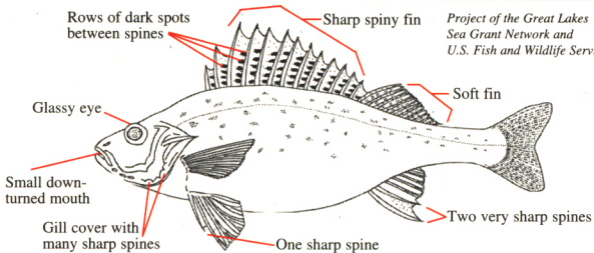


Photo Credit: Gary Cholwek



How to Identify Eurasian Ruffe (adult shown)

*Project of the Great Lakes
Sea Grant Network and
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service*



General Characteristics

- Very slimy when handled
- Usually less than 6 inches (15.5 cm) long
- Perch-like body shape

The Ruffe

Eurasian ruffe (rhymes with tough) may pose a serious threat to water ecosystems and to sport and commercial fishing. This invader may compete with native fish for food and habitat. First discovered in western Lake Superior in 1986, ruffe populations have rapidly increased in the St. Louis River at Duluth-Superior and spread to other rivers and bays along the south shore of western Lake Superior. They have also spread to Thunder Bay, Ontario on Lake Superior, and the Thunder Bay River, Michigan on Lake Huron.

The potential for ruffe to expand their range in North American waters is causing great concern. Anglers can be the first to discover ruffe because these fish are commonly caught by hook and line. Early detection of isolated populations may help slow or prevent the spread of ruffe. Your help is vital to report new sightings and to prevent their spread.

What you can do

- Learn to identify the ruffe (see back cover).
- Always drain water from your boat, livewell, and bilge before leaving any water access.
- Always dispose of your unwanted bait on land.
- Never dip your bait bucket into a lake or river if it has water in it from another.
- Never dump live fish from one body of water into another.
- **If you catch a ruffe** (outside the Duluth area of Lake Superior and the St. Louis River estuary), kill it, freeze it, and call the *Invading Species Hotline* in Ontario, (800) 563-7711; your local Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources office; or the Lake Superior Management Unit at (807) 475-1231. ***Do not throw it back alive!***

REMINDER: *Know the rules!*

Ruffe specimens are needed to confirm sightings, but many Great Lakes jurisdictions have different rules regarding possession and transport. Always contact your local natural resource management agency for instructions. Never transport a live ruffe.