

Ruffe WATCH



Photo Credit: Gary Cholwek

INCHES

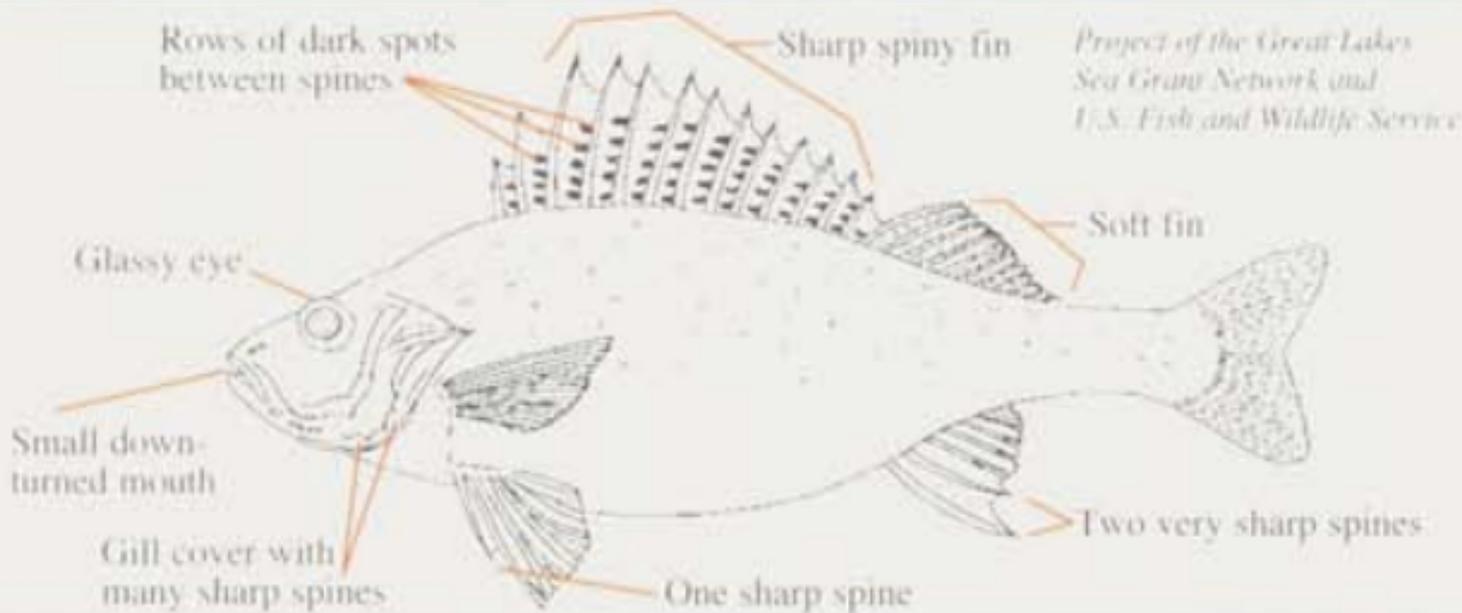
1

2

3

4

How to Identify Eurasian Ruffe (adult shown)



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 aquatic 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 to report new sightings and to prevent their spread is vital.

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 or in the trash.
- Never dip your bait bucket into a lake or river if it has water in it from another waterbody.
- 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 Illinois-Indiana Sea Grant Extension in Zion, IL, (847) 872-8677; or the Illinois Department of Natural Resources Division of Fisheries in Des Plaines, IL, (847) 294-4134; or the Indiana Department of Natural Resources Division of Fish and Wildlife in Indianapolis, IN, (317) 232-4080. **Do not throw it back alive!**

REMINDER: Know the rules!

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