

INVASIVE SPECIES ALERT!

BULLHEADS

PROHIBITED IN BC

(*Ameiurus spp*)

REPORT INVASIVE SPECIES

www.reportinvasives.ca

*Specific to three non-native species: Black Bullhead (*Ameiurus melas*)
Brown Bullhead (*Ameiurus nebulosus*) and Yellow Bullhead
(*Ameiurus natalis*)

NATIVE RANGE

Bullheads are native to regions of eastern North America.

DESCRIPTION

Bullheads...

- Have four pairs of barbels (whisker-like projections) around mouth and snout
- Have a large, flattened head
- Are stout with a thick body
- Do not have scales
- Have a strong spine on leading edge of dorsal fin
- Can grow to 50 cm in length
- Are the only freshwater fish species in B.C. with a strong spine along the leading edge of the pectoral fin (on side of body)



PRIMARY IMPACT:
Bullheads impact native species through predation and competition.

Features	Yellow Bullhead	Brown Bullhead	Black Bullhead
Colour of barbels (whisker-like projections)	cream to white	dark brown-black	dark brown-black
Colour of dorsal side of body	yellow-olive to slate black	yellow-brown	black-brown
Colour of sides	light yellow-olive	evenly coloured	blotched
Colour of ventral side of body	bright yellow-white	dirty white	light brown



HOW CAN WE STOP THEM?

- Do not possess, breed, release, sell or transport live Bullheads in B.C. (**It is illegal!**)
- Be aware of the species that you buy for aquariums, as it could be PROHIBITED in B.C.
- Raise awareness to avoid the spread of this species into B.C. waters

BULLHEADS (*Ameiurus* spp.)



Photo: Matthias Herborg

WHY SHOULD WE CARE?

All three species of Bullheads...

- Have shown to reduce the abundance and diversity of native prey species in regions of the US where they have been introduced
- Can indirectly impact the feeding efficiency of visual predators, due to their feeding behavior that stirs up substrate and thus increases the water turbidity

Yellow Bullheads...

- Predate on amphibians, and are believed to be partially responsible for the decline in the Chiricahua leopard frog *Rana chiricahuensis* of Arizona, due to heavy predation

Black Bullheads...

- Have been found to predate on newly hatched gamefish species in parts of the US where they have been introduced
- Have been shown to compete with native fish species for food and habitat space
- Are known carriers of red spot disease, which could be transferred and harmful to native fish in B.C.

Brown Bullheads...

- Are known carriers of viral haemorrhagic septicaemia, which has been shown to cause death in various finfish species
*There have been reported large die-offs of native fish species in the Great Lakes from this disease

BIOLOGY & SPREAD

Bullheads most likely arrived in B.C. as contaminants with shipments of other game fish that were released into provincial waters. Once introduced, they are able to spread due to their omnivorous diet and tolerance to a range of water temperature and other water quality conditions. Bullheads are capable of surviving at extremely low oxygen levels. They are also able to hibernate in the mud, in order to avoid harsh winter conditions in their northern ranges.

HABITAT

Bullheads can be found in slow streams and rivers with high vegetation; along with lakes, lagoons and ponds. Bullheads tolerate waters with low oxygen concentrations and high temperatures. They can even be found out of water for long periods of time.

ARE THEY HERE YET?

Yes. All three species of Bullhead have been introduced into B.C. The first Yellow Bullhead identified in B.C. came from Silvermere Lake (Mission) in 2005, but since then, several other populations have been identified in the Lower Mainland. Black Bullheads have been reported in several lakes in the Lower Mainland and Okanagan regions. Brown Bullheads have been introduced into several regions in B.C., including the Lower Mainland, Vancouver Island and the Okanagan.

PROHIBITED IN BC

LOOKALIKES

There are no similar looking native species in freshwater bodies of B.C.

WHAT SHOULD I DO IF I FIND ONE?

Report Bullheads, or any other invasive species via the **Report Invasives phone app**, or via the **webform** available on the B.C. Inter-Ministry Invasive Species Working Group website:

www.gov.bc.ca/invasive-species

DID YOU KNOW?

The Brown Bullhead was among the first fish introduced to the Pacific west coast as early as 1874.

