

INVASIVE SPECIES ALERT!

ORIENTAL WEATHERFISH

(*Misgurnus anguillicaudatus*)

NATIVE RANGE

Oriental Weatherfish are native to various countries of East Asia.

DESCRIPTION

Oriental Weatherfish...

- Have a long eel-like body shape, reaching up to 25 cm in length
- Have a small and narrow mouth that is lined with six barbells (resemble thick cat whiskers)
- Are yellow to brown in colour with greenish-gray to dark brown spots on backside and are pale grey to silver on underside
- Are also called Dojo, Gold Dojo, Weather Loach, Japanese Weatherfish, and Amur Weatherfish
- Have a thickened edge on leading ray of pectoral fin
- Have a distinct retractable spine below the eye

WHY SHOULD WE CARE?

Oriental Weatherfish...

- Have shown to reduce diversity of aquatic insects in other areas where they have been introduced
- Could compete with native fish species in B.C. for food, shelter and spawning sites
- Are known carriers of pathogens and parasites that are harmful to native fish species, birds and humans

BIOLOGY & SPREAD

Oriental Weatherfish have spread through human assisted introductions in the aquaculture and aquarium trades and as live bait. They can tolerate water temperatures between 2-30 °C and are able to breathe air when in oxygen-depleted waters. Once introduced, this species can spread quickly, as one fertile female can lay up to 100,000 eggs in her lifetime.

Once introduced, Oriental weatherfish reduce the amount and diversity of aquatic insects, and compete with native fish species for food

PROHIBITED IN BC



Photo: Martina Beck

PRIMARY IMPACT: Have shown to compete with native fish species for food in other areas where they are introduced.

REPORT INVASIVE SPECIES
www.reportinvasives.ca



Photo: New York Department of Environmental Conservation, Bugwood.org

DID YOU KNOW?

Oriental Weatherfish can breathe air by passing it through their digestive track and releasing the air from a vent in the anterior part of their gut. This allows them to live in extreme environments of low oxygen and to burry into mud during extending periods of drought.

ORIENTAL WEATHERFISH *(Misgurnus anguillicaudatus)*

HABITAT

Oriental Weatherfish are primarily found in rivers, lakes, swamps, ponds, rice fields and field ditches. They favour mud or silt substrates in shallow depths; and adults generally prefer stagnant or slow flowing water.

LOOKALIKES

Oriental Weatherfish could be confused for Ammocoetes, a larval stage of the pacific lamprey (*Entosphenus tridentatus*). Both species are found in the same muddy substrates of slow moving rivers and streams. Ammocoetes **are thinner** than oriental Weatherfish and **do not have barbels** (whisker-like projections) around the mouth.

HOW CAN WE STOP THEM?

- Do not possess, breed, release, sell or transport live Oriental Weatherfish 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

ARE THEY HERE YET?

Yes. In B.C., Oriental Weatherfish are present in the Lower Fraser Valley, specifically in the Alouette River system (see map at right).

MANAGEMENT STATUS

A provincial Risk Assessment was completed in the spring of 2014 for the Oriental weatherfish, as it is considered a threat to B.C.'s freshwater ecosystems. Extent surveys were conducted in the summer of 2014, which confirmed a third location in the South Alouette River. According to the *Controlled Alien Species Regulation* of the provincial *Wildlife Act*, it is illegal to possess, breed, release, sell or transport oriental weatherfish in B.C. At this point in time, there are no effective eradication methods for Oriental weatherfish.

WHAT SHOULD I DO IF I FIND ONE?

Report Oriental Weatherfish, 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

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Photo: Martina Beck

