

INVASIVE SPECIES ALERT!

SNAKEHEADS *(Family Channidae)*

There are over 30 species in the family Channidae and all are prohibited in B.C. The most commonly sold Snakeheads are Northern (*Channa argus*), Giant (*C.micropeltes*), Blotched (*C.maculata*), and Chevron (*C.striata*).

NATIVE RANGE

Snakeheads are native to several countries in Asia.

DESCRIPTION

Snakeheads...

- Are golden tan to pale brown in colour, with dark blotches across body that are more connected towards the tail
- Have a single long dorsal (on backside) fin and a singular long anal fin (on underside) Have a small anteriorly depressed head, with eyes located on top of head
- Have enlarged scales on head
- Have a large mouth that extends beyond the eyes
- Have large canine teeth and a protruding lower jaw
- Can grow to be 100 cm long and weigh up to 8 kg (species dependent)
- Are extremely slimy when removed from water

WHY SHOULD WE CARE?

Snakeheads...

- Can compete with native fish for food and habitat
- Could impact B.C. ecosystems and food chains by depleting populations of native prey species
- Are able to spread quickly to connecting watersheds
- Are highly adaptive, which makes them high risk for establishment in B.C.
- Are known carriers of red spot disease that infects freshwater fish
- Are known vectors of several diseases and parasites that can infect fish and humans

BIOLOGY & SPREAD

Snakeheads are being imported into North America from Asia for the international food and aquarium trades. The concern is that they could be accidentally or intentionally released into B.C. waters. Once introduced, snakeheads can travel quickly, making them extremely difficult to control.



Photo: U.S. Geological Survey, Bugwood.org

UGA13546

PRIMARY IMPACT:

Snakeheads are dominant predators that can decrease prey populations and compete with native fish species.

REPORT INVASIVE SPECIES

www.reportinvasives.ca

DID YOU KNOW?

The Northern Snakehead has the ability to breathe air and survive outside of water for long periods of time. In order to avoid drought or other harsh conditions, Northern Snakeheads have been found travelling over land in search of new habitats and burying deep into mud substrate to hibernate. Their ability to survive on land, also allows Northern Snakeheads to predate on terrestrial species such as snakes, frogs and small mammals.

SNAKEHEADS *(Family Channidae)*

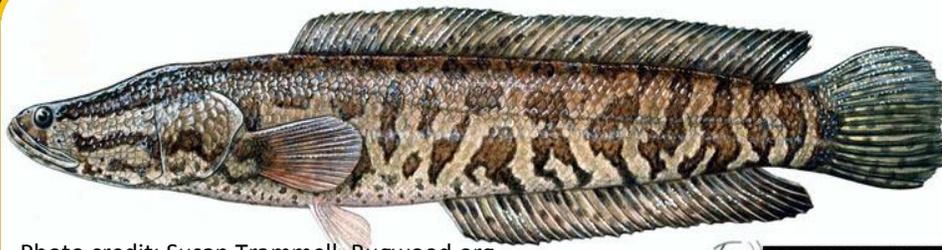


Photo credit: Susan Trammell, Bugwood.org

7mm UGA1354060



Photo: U.S. Geological Survey, Bugwood.org

54311

Features	Snakeheads	Burbot	Pike Chiclids
Dorsal fin(s)	1 large	2 dorsal fins	1
Barbel (whisker-like projection)	None	yes (1 on chin)	1
Body Markings	Have dark blotches across body, more closely together near the tail	Have dark blotches across body	Have vertical dark bands on sides of body
Scales	Have scales on body and head *tile like on head	Have scales on body and head *tile like on head	Have thin scales, only seen on body
Size	Can grow up to 1 meter in length (depending on species)	can grow up to 1 meter in length	Only grow up to 20 cm in length
Teeth and Jaw	Have canine-like teeth; lower jaw extends past upper jaw	Have canine-like teeth; lower jaw extends past upper jaw	Lack canine-like teeth; lower jaw extends past upper jaw

HABITAT

Snakeheads can be found in a variety of habitats such as lakes, ponds, streams, and ditches, in shallow water with vegetation. They are highly adaptable given their tolerance to varying temperatures and water quality conditions.

HOW CAN WE STOP THEM?

- Do not possess, breed, release, sell or transport live Snakeheads 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

WHAT SHOULD I DO IF I FIND ONE?

Report Snakeheads, 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

LOOK-ALIKES

Snakeheads may be confused with the native Burbot (*Lota lota*) and non-native Pike Chiclids that are often sold in the pet trade.

ARE THEY HERE YET?

No. There are currently no known Snakeheads in B.C. In 2012, there was one individual Northern snakehead identified and captured in a pond in the Lower Mainland.

