

INVASIVE SPECIES ALERT!

WESTERN MOSQUITOFISH

(*Gambusia affinis*)

NATIVE RANGE

The Western Mosquitofish is native to the Mississippi River and its tributaries from southern Indiana and Illinois to the Gulf Coast and parts of northeastern Mexico.

DESCRIPTION

Western Mosquitofish...

- Are small, non-descript fish, that grow to be 1 - 5 cm long
- Have large eyes, that take up most of their face
- Have a distinct dusky black teardrop below the eye
- Are silver in colour, with a greenish-blue hue, and peppered with gray and black markings
- Have 1-3 rows of black spots on dorsal(back) and caudal(tail) fins

BIOLOGY & SPREAD

Western Mosquitofish can spread due to their wide ranging diet and competitive nature towards rival fish species. If introduced into B.C., their northern distribution would likely be limited by their intolerance to cold-waters and ice-cover during the winter; however southern regions of B.C. could be susceptible.

HABITAT

Western Mosquitofish are most commonly found in slow-flowing water, in vegetated ponds and lakes and pools in streams. They can also be found in brackish water.

ARE THEY HERE YET?

No. The northern-most population of Western Mosquitofish is in the province of Alberta at the Banff Hot Springs.

LOOKALIKES

There are no native or non-native species in B.C. that look similar to the Western Mosquitofish.

PROHIBITED IN BC

REPORT INVASIVE SPECIES

www.reportinvasives.ca



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PRIMARY IMPACT:

The Western Mosquitofish is extremely aggressive and can impact native species due to predation and competition.

DID YOU KNOW?

Western mosquitofish have been introduced worldwide to try and reduce mosquito populations. They have been listed by the Global Invasive Species Database as one of the **World's 100 Worst Invasive Species**.

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Photo: Cullen Hanks – inaturalist.org



Photo: Robert McDowell, Bugwood.org



Photo:
Margie Crisp – inaturalist.org

WHY SHOULD WE CARE?

Western Mosquitofish...

- Have been previously stocked in most US states including Washington, Oregon, Idaho, Montana, and Alaska *They are considered established in various regions of Washington, Oregon, Idaho and Montana
- Have shown to impact threatened and endangered native species in several US states where they have been introduced
- Predate on eggs, larvae and juveniles of other fish species
- Are known to be aggressive towards other fish species, sometimes killing or injuring them
- Have been noted to impact zooplankton, insects and crustaceans populations through predation and competition
- Are carriers of the ecrosis hematopoietic necrosis virus (EHNV) that can be fatal to rainbow trout (*Oncorhynchus mykiss*)
- Are potential hosts of helminth (worm) parasites, transmittable to fish and other species
- *Even though Western Mosquito Fish are considered sensitive to colder water temperatures, there have been documentations of this species surviving and spreading throughout US states such as Nebraska and Missouri where annual mean temperatures are notably similar to regions of southern B.C.

*Refer to the following links for more detailed information on impacts of Mosquitofish in the US:

<http://nas.er.usgs.gov/queries/FactSheet.aspx?SpeciesID=846>

<http://nas.er.usgs.gov/viewer/omap.aspx?SpeciesID=846>

WHAT SHOULD I DO IF I FIND ONE?

Report Western Mosquitofish, 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

HOW CAN WE STOP THEM?

- Do not possess, breed, release, sell or transport live Western Mosquitofish 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

