

INVASIVE SPECIES ALERT!

YELLOW PERCH (*Perca flavescens*)

REPORT INVASIVE SPECIES
www.reportinvasives.ca

NATIVE RANGE

Yellow Perch are native in North America, east of the Continental Divide. In Canada their native range starts in Alberta and extends northward into the Northwest Territories and eastward to Nova Scotia. Yellow Perch's southern native range extends into the US, reaching from North Dakota to the eastern Atlantic states, and south to South Carolina and Georgia.

DESCRIPTION

Yellow Perch...

- Are oval shaped and laterally compressed
- Are on average 10-25 cm long
- Have two dorsal (back) fins ; the fin closest to the head is taller and longer than the other
- Have a bright green to olive back, yellow-green sides, and white belly
- Have approximately 7 green-brown vertical bands on sides
- Have yellow-green dorsal and caudal fins, yellow-red pelvic fins, and a forked tail

WHY SHOULD WE CARE?

Yellow Perch...

- Could impact ecosystem biodiversity by predated heavily on young fish and insects
- Are known carriers of parasites that are harmful to other fish species
- Could compete with native fish species for food and habitat
- Have shown to impact salmon growth and survival in small B.C. lakes where they have been introduced

BIOLOGY AND SPREAD

Yellow Perch have been introduced to non-native regions by stowing away on boats; being released from fish markets and aquariums; being stocked for sport fishing, and escaping from fish lines when used as live-bait. Once established, Yellow Perch can reproduce and spread quickly. Females lay up to 15,000 eggs at a time, and these eggs develop into larva and juveniles that can drift to new regions downstream with the current. Mature individuals will also swim to new regions in search of food.

Photo: Matthias Herborg



PRIMARY IMPACT:
Yellow Perch have been found to compete with native predators for food and to reduce the abundance and diversity of native prey species.



DID YOU KNOW?

Yellow Perch have been widely stocked for fishing, as they are popular among recreational and commercial fisherman for their tasty meat. This species is relatively easy to catch when targeted or not, due to its voracious feeding behaviour.

YELLOW PERCH (*Perca flavescens*)

LOOKALIKES

Yellow Perch may be confused with a native fish species called a Walleye (*Sander vitreus*).

Distinguishing Feature	Yellow Perch	Walleye (native to northern BC)
Size comparison	Small (10-25 cm on average)	Large (30- 50 cm on average)
Vertical body bars	Yes	No (spotted markings)
Canine teeth	No	Yes
Lateral Scales (Scales running horizontally along lateral line)	Yes (52-61 scales)	Yes (more than 80 scales)
Pelvic fin colour	Bright Yellow- red	Dull green-brown
Body Shape	Oval and laterally compressed	Long and slender



HABITAT

Yellow Perch can be found in freshwater lakes, ponds, pools of creeks, rivers, along with brackish waters. They are able to withstand a wide range of water temperatures, allowing them to establish in northern and southern lakes in B.C.

ARE THEY HERE YET?

Yes. Yellow Perch have spread northwards into the Pend d'Oreille, Kootenay and Okanagan watersheds in British Columbia from introduced populations in Washington State. They are also present on Vancouver Island and Lower Mainland regions, which is most likely due to intentional introductions. Yellow Perch were successfully eradicated from the Thompson region. It has been debated whether the Charlie Lake and Swan lake populations of Yellow Perch in the Peace region are native to B.C.

HOW CAN WE STOP THEM?

- Do not transfer and/or release Yellow Perch within B.C.
- Do not use live fish as bait
- Do not release aquarium fish into the wild
- Raise awareness to avoid further spread in B.C. waters

WHAT SHOULD I DO IF I FIND ONE?

Report Yellow Perch, 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

