

## New Occurrence of Pygmy Whitefish (*Prosopium coulterii*)



Pygmy Whitefish from Lake Superior near the Apostle Islands, Wisconsin – Konrad Schmidt

In October 2008, Paul Blanchfield and Lori Tate (Department of Fisheries and Oceans Canada) collected three Pygmy Whitefish from Winnange Lake about 35 miles east of Kenora, Ontario. The sexually mature female and two males were sampled with small-mesh bottom-set gill nets at 25-30 m (82-98 ft). One specimen was deposited in the Royal Ontario Museum fish collection in Toronto. This is the first known occurrence between Northwest populations and Lake Superior which are approximately 1100 miles apart at their nearest points (Figure 1).

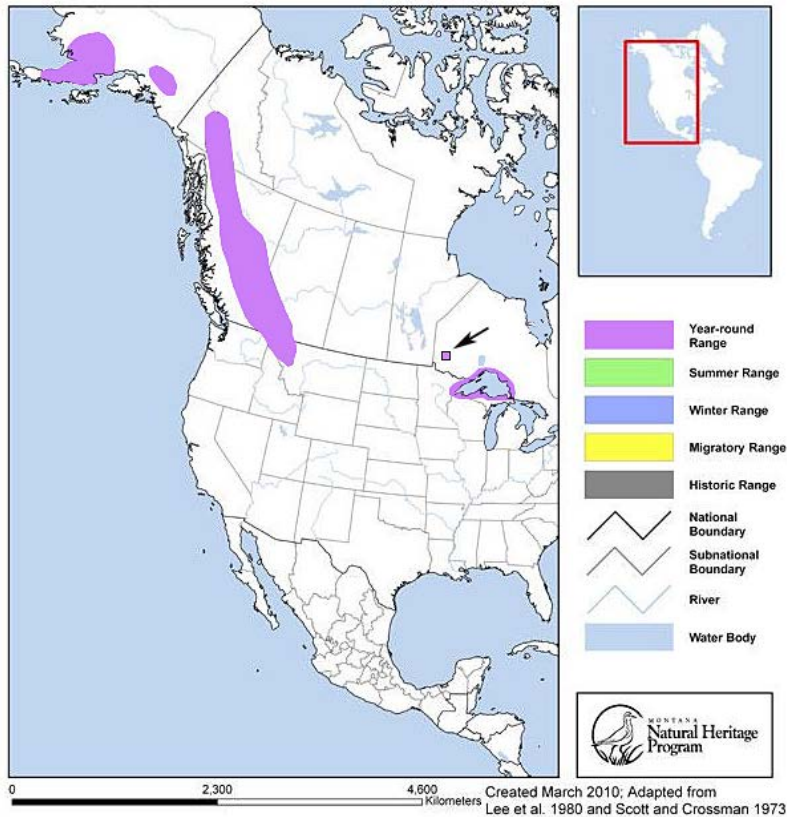


Figure 1. Pygmy Whitefish range in North America with black arrow pointing to 2008 locality.

The Lake Superior population was not discovered until 1952 (Scott and Crossman 1973). Winnange Lake is approximately 200 miles northwest of Lake Superior (Figure 2). Additional surveys using small-mesh gill nets in lakes of similar size and depth may yield many new occurrences. The NatureServe website (2011) ranks the species critically imperiled in Alberta and Washington, vulnerable in Wisconsin, and apparently secure in Alaska, Yukon Territory, British Columbia, and Michigan. It has not been ranked in Ontario, Idaho, Montana, and one omission: Minnesota.



Figure 2. Winnange Lake location circled in red.

#### References

- NatureServe. 2011. NatureServe Explorer: An online encyclopedia of life [web application]. Version 7.1. NatureServe, Arlington, Virginia. Available <http://www.natureserve.orgexplorer>. (Accessed: April 16, 2012).
- Scott, W. B. and E. J. Crossman. 1973. *Freshwater Fishes of Canada*. Bulletin 184. Fisheries Research Board of Canada. 966 pp.