

INCHES

1

2

3

4

Photo Credit: Gary Cholewick



Ruffe WATCH

How to Identify Eurasian Ruffe (*Gymnocephalus cernuus*)

Rows of dark spots
between spines

Sharp spiny fin

Glassy eye

Soft fin

Small down-
turned mouth

Two very
sharp spines

Gill cover with
many sharp spines

One sharp spine



**STOP AQUATIC
HITCHHIKERS!™**

Prevent transport of aquatic invasive species.
Clean **all** recreational equipment.

www.ProtectYourWaters.net

Project of the Great Lakes Sea Grant
Network and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

General Characteristics

- Very slimy when handled
- Usually less than 6 inches (15.5 cm) long
- Perch-like body shape

Ruffe (rhymes with tough)

Eurasian ruffe (*Gymnocephalus cernuus*) may pose a serious threat to aquatic ecosystems and to sport and commercial fishing. This invader may compete with native fish for food and habitat. First discovered in western Lake Superior in 1986, ruffe populations have rapidly increased in the St. Louis River at Duluth-Superior and spread to other rivers and bays along the south shore of western Lake Superior. They have also spread to Thunder Bay, Ontario on Lake Superior, and the Thunder Bay River, Michigan on Lake Huron.

The potential for ruffe to expand their range in North American waters is causing great concern. Anglers can be the first to discover ruffe because these fish are commonly caught by hook and line. Early detection of isolated populations may help slow or prevent the spread of ruffe. Your help to report new sightings and to prevent their spread is vital.

What you can do

- **Learn** to identify the ruffe (see back cover).
- **Inspect** and **remove** aquatic plants, animals, and mud from boat, motor, and trailer.
- **Drain** water from boat, livewell, and bilge before leaving any water access.
- **Dispose** of unwanted live bait and worms in the trash.
- **Never** dump live fish from one body of water into another.
- **Report** new sightings – note exact location; place specimens in a sealed container with rubbing (isopropyl) alcohol; and call the WI Sea Grant Program in Manitowoc, (920) 683-4697; the WI DNR in Madison, (608) 266-6437; or a local DNR office; or the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in Ashland, (715) 682-6185.

REMINDER: Know the rules!

Ruffe specimens are needed to confirm sightings, but many jurisdictions have different rules regarding possession and transport. Contact your local natural resource management agency for instructions. Never transport a live ruffe.