

# Goldfish

(*Carassius auratus*)

## About

Goldfish are an easy-to-keep aquarium fish sold worldwide through the aquarium and pet industries. Originally from Asia, these small freshwater fish are thought to be the first foreign fish species introduced to North America.

Despite their initial small size, Goldfish are big eaters and eat a wide variety of insects, crustaceans, and plant material allowing them to grow to many times their original size with enough food and space.

Goldfish can survive in most freshwater bodies, but prefer to swim in shallow, slow-moving waters. They can survive in water temperatures between 0-41°C and tolerate extremely low levels of dissolved oxygen.



## Range

Goldfish are widespread throughout North America and are typically found in lakes and streams near populated areas. In New Brunswick, there are known populations of Goldfish in ponds surrounding Fredericton, St. John, and other streams and lakes.

## How to identify Goldfish

- Variety of colours from olive, gold, white, and orange and can grow up to 60 cm long and weigh between 100-300g.
- Scales on the body but not the head and a fin that goes from the middle of the back to the base of the tail.
- To differentiate Koi from Goldfish, Koi have barbels (feelers that resemble whiskers) around their mouths while Goldfish do not have barbels.

## How did they get there?

Goldfish have been primarily introduced into NB waterways as **discarded pets** when people dump their Goldfish and aquariums into local waterbodies or as **pond “escapees”**.

If you are unable to care for a pet Goldfish, **Don't Let It Loose!** Instead, see if you can return your fish to the pet store, or ask friends, family, or the local aquarium community if they can rehome your pet.



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## Impacts

- Goldfish feed on native fish eggs, snails, aquatic plants, and small fish, while also competing with native fish species
- Goldfish feeding activity disturbs silt, increasing the turbidity (or cloudiness) of water, which prevents sunlight from reaching aquatic plants.
- Can reproduce very quickly and overrun lakes and ponds, taking away habitat and food sources from native fish species.
- Goldfish can introduce foreign diseases to waterbodies such as Koi herpesvirus (this virus does not affect humans)



Goldfish can grow to many times their original size

## Reporting & Restrictions

Goldfish are considered an invasive species in New Brunswick. Never release Goldfish into local rivers and lakes. If you observe a Goldfish, please submit a report on <http://www.iNaturalist.ca>



Invasive Aquatic species can also be reported to the **Department of Fisheries and Oceans**;

- Take photos. Note: the exact location (GPS coordinates), the observation date and identifying features.
- Contact: Toll-free: 1-866-759-6600 or Email: [Invaders.glf@dfo-mpo.gc.ca](mailto:Invaders.glf@dfo-mpo.gc.ca)

Goldfish are listed as **prohibited** for use as live bait when fishing. See the Government of New Brunswick's Fish Guide for more information

<https://www2.gnb.ca/content/dam/gnb/Departments/nr-rn/pdf/en/Fish/Fish.pdf>.

## References/Informative Links

New Brunswick Invasive Species Council: <http://nb invasives.ca>

Don't Let it Loose!: <https://canadainvasives.ca/programs/dont-let-it-loose/>

Invading Species Awareness Program:

<http://www.invadingspecies.com/invaders/fish/goldfish/>