

## CASE STUDY 1

*The Round Goby*

**THE ROUND GOBY** is a freshwater fish that grows to between 10 and 25 cm in length. Originally from central parts of Eurasia, it was discovered in the Great Lakes in the 1990s and is thought to have been accidentally discharged in the ballast water from oceangoing cargo ships visiting ports in the Great Lakes. The goby is no longer limited to the Great Lakes and is spreading throughout the region's rivers and canals.



Round goby (*Neogobius melanostomus*)

The round goby is an aggressive fish, especially when protecting its spawning grounds. It consumes great quantities of food and can eat clams, mussels,

plankton, large invertebrates, fish eggs, small fish, and insect larvae. The round goby can feed in total darkness due to a well-developed sensory system that allows it to detect water movement.

It can also feed in fast-moving water by attaching itself to the bottom of a stream or river with a suction-like disk on its underside.

The round goby is capable of rapid population growth and spawns repeatedly during the summer months, with the female producing up to 5,000 eggs each time. It can live in a variety of habitats and compete with native species for food and space. Often the round goby is the only fish that fishermen see in a section of water. This can make many riverbank or lake-front towns less appealing to visiting sport fishermen, who are trying to catch such fish as trout and salmon. One positive side effect is that the round goby eats another invasive species, the zebra mussel. Native predatory fish, such as the walleye, eat round gobies. ■



*The top map shows locations where the round goby was documented in 2000. The bottom map shows data from 2009.*