

WISCONSIN WILDCARDS



ALIEN INVADERS

SERIES 1

#25

RUFFE (RHYMES WITH TOUGH)

WHAT IS IT?

The ruffe has a perch-like body shape with spots on the dorsal fin; it is usually less than 6" long. It is native to Europe and Asia and was introduced to the United States in water carried in the bottom of sea-going ships.

WHAT'S THE PROBLEM?

Ruffe cause problems for our native fish because they like to live in the same habitat and eat the same food as our native fish. The ruffe is a tough competitor that can displace our native fish.

WHAT CAN I DO?

- Learn how to identify ruffe.
- If you catch a ruffe, kill it.
- Don't throw it back into the water alive!

WILD!

It's very SLIMY!

Painting: Gary Cholwek
Recycled paper

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WISCONSIN WILDCARDS



SERIES 1

#26

ALIEN INVADERS

THREE SPINE STICKLEBACK

WHAT IS IT?

These 2 1/2" long fish have three stiff spines on their back in front of their top fin (dorsal fin). Native to the Atlantic coast, sticklebacks probably swam here through the St. Lawrence Seaway and the Welland Canal that bypasses Niagara Falls.

WHAT'S THE PROBLEM?

These fish cause a problem for our native fish because they like to eat the same food as they do.

WHAT CAN I DO?

- Learn how to identify three spine sticklebacks.
- If you catch a stickleback, kill it.
- Don't throw it back into the water alive!

WILD!

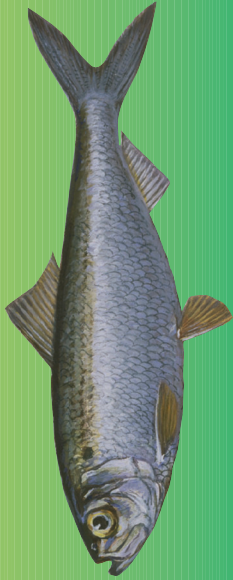
Sticklebacks can lock their spines in the upright position to repel predators.

Photo: John Lyons, WI DNR
Recycled paper

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WISCONSIN WILDCARDS



SERIES 1
#27

ALIEN INVADERS

ALEWIFE

WHAT IS IT?

About 6" long, these silvery saltwater fish made it to the Great Lakes through the St. Lawrence Seaway and the Welland Canal that bypasses Niagara Falls.

WHAT'S THE PROBLEM?

Without predators, alewife populations can grow and compete with native fish for food. They also prey on yellow perch. They make beaches stink in the spring! These fish cannot adjust to sudden water temperature changes so many die when they come near shore to spawn in the spring.

WHAT CAN I DO?

- Learn how to identify alewives.
- If you catch an alewife, kill it.
- Don't throw it back into the water alive!

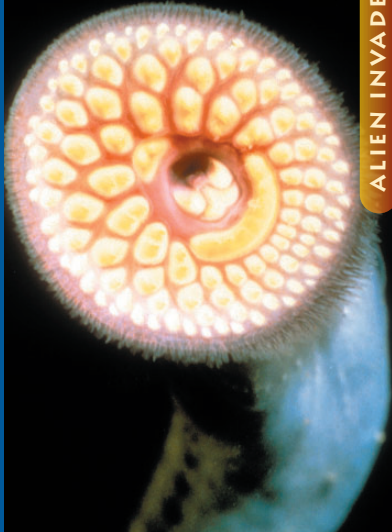
WILD! Pacific salmon, another introduced species, are stocked to control alewives.

Painting: Virgil Beck, WI DNR
Recycled paper

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WISCONSIN WILDCARDS



ALIEN INVADERS

SERIES 1
#28

SEA LAMPREY

WHAT IS IT?

These eel-like fish, up to 36" long, have round sucking mouths. They invaded the Great Lakes from the Atlantic Ocean through the Welland Canal that bypasses Niagara Falls.

WHAT'S THE PROBLEM?

They are parasites! They attach to the sides of fish, suck out their blood and body fluids and can cause the fish to die. Once they get into an area it is very hard to get rid of them. It costs taxpayers about \$15 million each year to control lampreys.

WHAT CAN I DO?

- Learn how to identify lampreys.
- If you catch a lamprey, kill it.
- Don't throw it back into the water alive!

WILD! A single lamprey can kill up to 40 pounds of fish in its lifetime.

Photo: Great Lakes Sea Grant Network
Exotic Species Graphics Library
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WISCONSIN WILDCARDS



ALIEN INVADERS

SERIES 1/
WISCONSIN

#30

RUSTY CRAYFISH

WHAT IS IT? Rusty crayfish have larger claws than most other native crayfish species with dark, rusty spots on each side of their carapace (middle part of their outer body.)

WHAT'S THE PROBLEM? Rusty crayfish feed very aggressively on aquatic plants reducing the abundance of vegetation in many northern Wisconsin lakes. They also are very prolific and reduce native crayfish populations.

WHAT CAN I DO?

- Learn how to identify rusty crayfish.
- Don't transport them from lake to lake by using them as fishing bait.

WILD! Female rusty crayfish can lay from 80-575 eggs!

Photo: WI DNR
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WISCONSIN WILDCARDS



ALIEN INVADERS

SERIES 1
#31

ROUND GOBY

WHAT IS IT?

The 3-6" long goby has a single suction-cup shaped pelvic fin (bottom fin in front of belly). It came from Europe and Asia to the U.S. in water carried in the bottom of sea-going ships.

WHAT'S THE PROBLEM?

The goby pushes native fish from their habitat, eats their eggs and young, survives in poor water quality and spawns several times a year. It's tough competition for our native fish!

WHAT CAN I DO?

- Learn how to identify round gobies.
- If you catch a goby, kill it.
- Don't throw it back into the water alive!

WILD!

A round goby's eyes bulge like a frog's eyes!

Photo: © David Jude
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