

Round goby (*Neogobius melanostomus*)

What do round gobies look like?

Round gobies are usually small (3-6 inches long) with large pectoral fins and an unusual single, fused pelvic fin that is shaped like a suction cup. This characteristic helps to distinguish them from native sculpins.

Where do round gobies live?

Round gobies are bottom-dwelling fish that live in lakes and rivers on rocky substrates. They are most commonly found near shore.



Ron Dermott; <http://www.fs.fed.us/>

How did round gobies arrive here?

Round gobies are native to Europe and Asia and were first found in the Great Lakes in 1990 in the St. Clair River in Michigan. They arrived after being transported in the ballast water of ocean-going vessels. They are now in all the Great Lakes, the Mississippi River watershed, and are extending their range. They are not currently in Kentucky but have been documented as close as Ohio.

How do round gobies spread?

Gobies can spread on their own by swimming and through population expansion. They reproduce quickly and can become quite abundant. Anglers can inadvertently spread gobies if they are used as bait.

Why are round gobies a problem?

Round gobies are voracious predators and competitors for food. They out-compete native bottom-dwelling fish, forcing them out of their living spaces and spawning sites. They get so numerous that even smallmouth bass that guard their eggs cannot successfully defend their nests from the onslaught of hungry gobies. Mussels are among this species' invertebrate food sources, and if established, the round goby could threaten Kentucky's threatened and endangered mussel populations.

How can I help prevent the spread of round gobies?

- Do not use them as bait and be certain they are not included in the minnows sold to you as bait.
- Always dispose of unused live bait in the trash, not in the water.
- Teach others about round gobies and their threat to native fish.