

# Invasive Species Alert

## Eurasian Ruffe

(*Gymnocephalus cernuus*)

\*Established in Michigan waters\*

### Identification:

- Olive-brown back side and yellow-white belly
- Fused dorsal fins with no notch, dark spots on membranes between the rays of the fin
- About 25 cm. in length
- Small downturned mouth



Illustration by Joe Tomelleri, Ontario's  
Invading Species Program

**Habitat:** Ruffe are bottom dwelling fish that inhabit fresh and brackish waters. They appear to do well in a variety

of habitat types, but abundance appears to be correlated with eutrophication and nutrient inputs.



Gary Cholwek, U.S. Geological Survey,  
Bugwood.org

**Diet:** Diet consists of mainly aquatic insects, but Eurasian ruffe will occasionally consume the eggs of other fish. A well-developed sensory system allows this species to feed at night. They have a few natural predators and the ability to hunt at night further reduces the risk of predation.

**Native Range:** Northern Europe and Asia

**Local Concern:** The reduced risk of predation from hunting at night and having few natural predators in the United States makes them successful invaders.

**Means of Introduction:** Most likely ballast water from transoceanic vessels

### Native look-alikes and how you can tell them apart from Eurasian ruffe:

- ✓ **Walleye:** Dorsal fins **separated**, bottom of caudal fin has white tip, large mouth
- ✓ **Sauger:** Dorsal fins **separated**, large mouth
- ✓ **Yellow perch:** Dorsal fins **separated**, no distinct spots on dorsal fin, dark vertical stripes

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