

NOT WANTED



ROUND GOBY

ALIAS: *NEOGOBIOUS MELANSTOMUS*

Distribution: Black and Caspian Sea areas.
Now established in US Great Lakes.

Size: Up to 10 inches in length.

Description: Female and immature male round gobies are a mottled gray and brown color. Spawning males turn almost solid black. Round gobies have a soft body and a large, rounded head with eyes that protrude near the top. Round gobies prefer a rocky or gravel habitat; they hide in crevices or actively burrow into gravel when startled. They generally inhabit the near shore area, although they will migrate to deeper water in winter. They also are found in rivers.

Impacts to Aquatic Ecosystem: Round gobies are aggressive, out-competing native fishes for food and space, and often become the dominant fish species where it invades. Round gobies can eat mollusks, fish eggs, plankton, fish, and benthic invertebrates. In the Great Lakes, heavy feeding on invasive mussels (zebra and quagga) may result in bioaccumulation of toxins higher in the food chain, and can be dangerous to people who consume fishes that prey on round gobies. The round goby is difficult prey for larger, native game fish, due to a defensive mechanism, in which the fish expands and protrudes sharp, spiny gill plates. A predator fish that eats a round goby, may have it lodge in the throat and die from cuts and loss of blood.

Means of Introduction: Most likely arrived in the Great Lakes as stowaways in the ballast water of ocean going ships.

Status in Maryland: Currently not in Maryland.



Look-A-Likes: Round gobies look similar to native Maryland sculpins, but the two species can be easily separated by the fused pelvic fins on the underside of round gobies. Sculpins have two distinct pelvic fins, not one large fin. This fin can be used by gobies as a suction cup to anchor to rocks and other hard substrates during times of high water flow.

Legal Standing: Prohibited from import, transport, sale, purchase and possession in Maryland.
*Special provisions for delivering specimens to authorities, visit www.dnr.state.md.us/invasives.

For more information on invasive species in Maryland visit www.dnr.state.md.us/invasives.

