

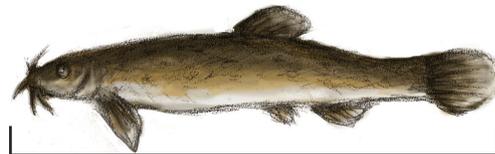
What have we got here



INTRODUCED (OR ALIEN) FISH

Waterways are important parts of the Murray catchment and including rivers, creeks and billabongs. These places make great homes for our native fish but they are also homes for introduced or alien fish. Currently in the Murray-Darling Basin, there are 12 species of fish that have been introduced.

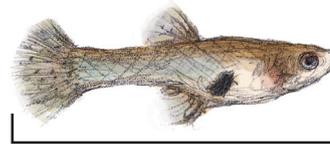
- Oriental weatherloach:



190 - 250mm

Native to Asia, this species was a popular aquarium fish but was released by people into waterways when they outgrew their tanks. Weatherloach like slow-flowing water and can survive in very poor quality water, unlike our native fish. Weatherloach compete for food and habitat, they may carry parasites and they eat native fish eggs. It is now illegal to bring weatherloach into Australia.

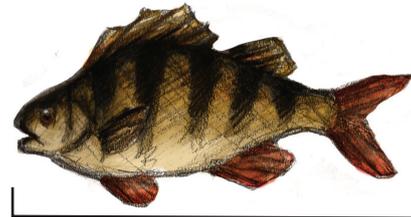
- Eastern gambusia - Mosquitofish:



60mm

Native to North America, this fish was first brought into Australia as an aquarium fish but was later released to try and control mosquitoes. They are now a pest species in our waterways where they compete for food and habitat. Although small, they are very aggressive and will chase and nip the fins of larger fish. It is thought that they are reducing frog population as they eat newly hatched tadpoles. Mosquitofish give birth to live young and can reproduce much faster than native fish.

- Redfin perch - English Perch:



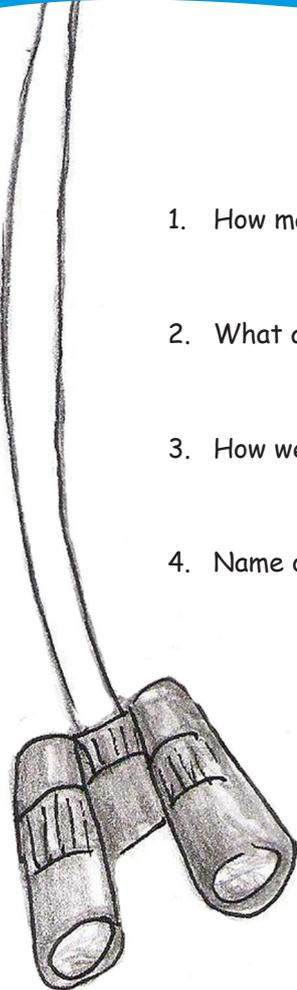
450 - 600mm

Originating in Europe, Redfin were brought to Australia as a sport fish. Redfin are still stocked in many dams and often escape into our waterways. They compete with our native fish for food and they eat tadpoles, insects and small native fish. Redfin can also carry a virus that affects native fish.

- Introduced or alien fish:

Since it was people who introduced the fish, we are responsible for the problems they cause. If you have unwanted aquarium fish, dispose of them humanely or take it back to the pet shop - **do not** flush them down the toilet as they can end up in our waterways.

ACTIVITIES



1. How many species of introduced or alien fish occur in the Murray-Darling Basin?
2. What alien fish are in a river or creek near your school?
3. How were Oriental weatherloach introduced into our waterways?
4. Name one reason that makes Oriental weatherloach a pest:
5. What were the reasons for introducing Mosquitofish into our waterways?
6. Name one reason why Mosquitofish are a pest:
7. Why were Redfin introduced into our waterways?
8. Name one reason why Redfin is a pest:
9. Who is responsible for the introduction of introduced or alien fish? Why?
10. What would you do if you had an unwanted aquarium fish?

For more information on alien and native fish please visit
the Murray Darling Basin Authority's website: www.mdba.gov.au

- Factsheets compiled by Miss Stacey Staunton-Latimer, Wirraminna Environmental Education Centre,
- Sketches drawn by Crystal Kirk, Year 9 Burrumbuttock
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