

NATIVE AQUARIUM-FISH SPECIES OF CANADA

A NANFA Guide

by Dave Knelson

Canada covers a total of 3,850,000 square miles, 291,571 square miles of which--7.6 percent of the total-- are freshwater waterways. In these waters live 181 different species which represent 24 fish families. Of these species, some 87 are of a size suitable for the home aquarium. Of the 181 species, 177 are considered to be true natives, while four have been introduced by man for scientific purposes. In addition to these, Poecilia latipinna, P. reticulata, Xiphophorus helleri, Gambusia affinis, and Oichlasoma nigrofasciatum have become established in Cave and Basin Hot Springs in Banff National Park, Alberta. These five occurrences undoubtedly result from hobbyist introductions. The other four species, now considered to be "natives," are Brown Trout, Carp, Goldfish, and Tench.

In addition to these, and not included in this discussion, are a great many marine species available on the coasts.

Not every species covered enjoys wide distribution. In fact, some are found only in a single location. Others are widespread throughout the country; and, almost without exception, the ranges of most species include portions of the U.S.A.

It would be wise for any collector to seek additional information from Provincial Fisheries and Wildlife Departments before attempting a collecting trip. In fact, most Provinces require collectors to have collecting permits which specify the species sought and number of specimens to be captured. These permits are usually free, and are good for a full year. If you are a member of an aquarium society, it is possible to have permits provided for your members en masse by submitting a list of names and other required information. This might be the best choice should your group be planning a native-fish collecting trip.

Native fish species are found in each Province and Territory. Here is a list of species found in each jurisdiction, including all freshwater species, not only those suitable for home aquaria:

Newfoundland (Nfld)	20	Manitoba (MB)	79
Labrador (Lab)	21	Saskatchewan (SK)	60
Nova Scotia (NS)	34	Alberta (AB)	51
New Brunswick (NB)	48	British Columbia (BC)	71
Prince Edward Isles (PEI)	19	Northwest Territories (NWT)	41
Quebec (PQ)	105	Yukon Territories (Yuk)	31
Ontario (Ont)	132		

(The above abbreviations will be used throughout this list.)

The following is a list of the species most suitable for the home aquarium and found in Canadian waters. The scientific name, common names, size (average size), usual habitat, and distribution by Province or Territory are included.

1. Umbra limi, 2-4" (51-102 mm), Central Mudminnow, Western Mudminnow, Mississippi Mudminnow, Mudfish, Dogfish. Heavily vegetated ponds, pools, and small creeks. PQ, Ont & MB.
2. Acrocheilus alutaceus, 6-7" (152-178 mm), Chiselmouth, Hardmouth, & Squaremooth. Prefers lakes over rivers. BC.
3. Carassius auratus, 5-10" (127-254 mm), Goldfish, Gold Carp. Warm, weedy shallows of lakes. Ont, AB, & BC.
- 4.\* Chrosomus eos, 2" (51 mm), Northern Redbelly Dace. Boggy lakes, creeks, & ponds--quiet waters. NS, NB, PEI, PQ, Ont, MB, SK, AB, & BC.
- 5.\* Chrosomus neogaeus, 3" (76 mm), Finescale Dace, Bronze Minnow. Bogs, ponds, streams, and lakes. Prefers cooler waters. NB, PQ, ONT, MB, SK, AB, & BC.
6. Clinostomus elongatus, 3" (76 mm), Redside Dace, Red-sided Shiner. Clear, cool, flowing streams. ONT.
7. Couesius plumbeus, 4" (102 mm), Lake Chub, Northern Chub, Lake Chub, Chub Minnow, & Bottletfish. Deep water--in lakes and large rivers. NS, PQ, ONT, MB, SK, AB, BC, NWT, & YUK.
8. Exoglossum maxillingua, 3-5" (89-114 mm), Outlips Minnow, Eye Picker, Little Sucker. Clear, warm streams. PQ & ONT.
9. Hybognathus hankinsoni, 2.5" (64 mm), Brassy Minnow. Bog ponds & cool streams. PQ, ONT, MB, SK, AB, & BC.
10. Hybognathus nuchalis, 3" (76 mm), Silvery Minnow. Quiet, weedy, protected areas off lakes & rivers. ONT & MB.

\* The Atlas changes this genus to Phoxinus.

CANADIAN AQUARIUM FISH, cont'd.

- 11.\* Hybopsis storeriana, 4-6" (102-152 mm), Silvery Chub & Storer's Chub. Deep lakes, pools, and moving streams. ONT & MB. SK.
- 12.\* Hybopsis x-punctata, 3" (76 mm), Gravel Chub & Spotted Chub. Slow-moving, deep streams & rivers. ONT.
13. Mylocheilus caurinus, 4-6" (102-125 mm), Peamouth, Peamouth Chub, & Northwest Dace. Shallow, weedy lakes & rivers. AB & BC.
14. Nocomis biguttatus, 3.5" (89 mm), Horny-Headed Chub. Clear, well vegetated, slow-moving streams & rivers. ONT & MB.
15. Nocomis micropogon, 4" (102 mm), River Chub, Crested Chub. Clear water--large rivers. ONT.
16. Notemigonus crysoleucas, 3-5" (76-127 mm), Golden Shiner, Roach, Bream, Sunfish, Bitterhead, Butterfish, & Eastern Golden Shiner. Clear, weedy, quiet, shallow waters. NS, NB, PQ, ONT, MB, & SK.
17. Notropis anogenus, 1.5-2" (38-51 mm), Pugnosed Shiner. Clear, weedy lakes & small streams. ONT.
18. Notropis atherinoides, 2-3" (51-76 mm). Emerald Shiner, Lake Shiner. Open water of lakes and large rivers. PQ, ONT, MB, SK, BC, & NWT. AB.
19. Notropis bifrenatus, 2" (51 mm). Bridle Shiner. Clear, quiet streams with submerged vegetation. PQ & ONT.
20. Notropis blennius, 2.5-3" (64-76 mm), River Shiner, Poor Minnow, & Straw-colored Minnow. Streams & small rivers. MB, SK, & AB. ONT.
21. Notropis cornutus, 2.5-4" (64-102). Silver Shiner, Common Shiner, Eastern Shiner, Redfin Shiner, Rough-head, Creek Shiner, Silverside, & Dace. Streams and shore waters of clear lakes. NS, NB, PQ, ONT, MB, & SK. PEI.
22. Notropis dorsalis, 2.5" (64 mm), Bigmouth Shiner. Slow-moving rivers & streams. MB.
23. Notropis emiliae, 2" (50 mm). Pugnosed Minnow. Slow-moving waters with abundant vegetation. ONT.
24. Notropis heterodon, 2.5" (64 mm), Black-Chin Shiner, Black-Nosed Minnow, Black-Nosed Dace, & Muskoka Minnow. Clear, clean, well vegetated streams and small rivers. PQ & ONT.

\*The Atlas classifies #34, Platygobio gracilis in this list, as Hybopsis gracilis. See #34.

CANADIAN FISH, cont'd

25. Notropis heterolepis, 2.5" (64 mm), Black-Nose Shiner.  
Clear, well vegetated lakes & streams. NS, NB, PQ,  
ONT, MB, & SK.
26. Notropis hudsonius, 2.5-3" (64-76 mm), Spottail Shiner,  
Spawneater, Spottail Minnow, & Sucking Carp. Large  
& small lakes, rivers, & streams. PQ, ONT, MB, SK, & AB.
27. Notropis rubellus, 2-3" (51-76 mm), Rosy-faced Shiner.  
Slow-moving streams & rivers. PQ, ONT, & MB.
28. Notropis spilopterus, 3" (76 mm), Spotfin Shiner,  
Silver-finned Minnow, Satin-finned Minnow. Large,  
flowing rivers. PQ & ONT.
29. Notropis stramineus, 2-3" (51-76 mm), Sand Shiner,  
Shore Minnow, Straw-colored Minnow. Shallow lakes  
or large rivers with sparse vegetation. PQ, ONT, MB, & SK.
30. Notropis umbratilis, 2.5" (64 mm), Redfin Shiner.  
Clear, quiet, heavily vegetated pools. ONT.
31. Notropis volucellus, 2-3" (51-76 mm), Mimic Shiner.  
Quiet waters of lakes & rivers. PQ, ONT, & MB.
32. Pimephales notatus, 2.5" (64 mm), Blunt-nosed Minnow.  
Ponds, creeks, and small rivers, often  
near built-up areas. PQ, ONT, & MB.
33. Pimephales promelas, 2" (51 mm), Fathead Minnow.  
Still waters--ponds, small lakes, & ditches. NB, PQ,  
ONT, MB, SK, & AB. NWT.
34. Platygobio gracilis, 5-7" (127-178 mm), Flathead Chub  
& Saskatchewan Dace. Flowing waters of large rivers.  
MB, SK, AB, & BC. NWT.
35. Rhinichthys atratulus, 2.5" (64 mm), Black-nosed Dace,  
Striped Dace, Redfin Dace, Brook Minnow, & Potbelly.  
Small, clear, swift-moving streams. NS, NB, PQ, ONT, & MB.
36. Rhinichthys cataractae, 3" (76 mm), Longnosed Dace.  
Swift-flowing streams. LAB, NB, PQ, MB, SK, AB, BC,  
YUK, & NWT.
37. Rhinichthys falcatus, 3" (76 mm), Leopard Dace. Slow-  
moving streams & rivers. BC.
38. Rhinichthys osculus, 2-3" (51-76 mm), Speckled Dace.  
Slow-moving streams & rivers. BC.
39. Richardsonius balteatus, 3-5" (76-127 mm). Redside Shiner,  
Redside Bream, Columbia River Minnow, Richardson's Minnow,  
Silver-sided Minnow, & Silver Shiner. Large lakes, small  
ponds, & moderately-flowing streams. AB & BC.

CANADIAN FISH, cont'd

40. Semotilus atromaculatus, 4" (102 mm), Horned Dace, Common Chub, Northern Creek Chub, Tommycod, Brown Chub, Silver Chub, Mud Chub, & Black-spot Chub. Small lakes, clear brooks, creeks, & streams. NS, NB, PQ, ONT, & MB.
41. Semotilus corporalis, 4" (102 mm), Fallfish, American Chub, Mohawk, Rough-nosed Chub, White or Silver Chub, Whiting, Corporel, Windfish, & Ohivin. Clear streams & lakes. NB, PQ, & ONT.
42. Semotilus margarita, 3.5" (89 mm), Pearl Dace, Northern Minnow, Nachtrieb Dace, & Northern Dace. Cool bog ponds, creeks, and small lakes. NS, NB, LAB, PQ, ONT, MN, SK, AB, & BC. NWT.
43. Ictalurus melas, 5-7" (127-178), Black Bullhead, Black Catfish, Yellow-belly Catfish, & Horned Pout. Small to medium-sized streams, rivers, & lakes. ONT, MB, SK, & BC. AB.
44. Ictalurus natalis, 8-12" (203-305 mm), Yellow Bullhead, Yellow Catfish. Clear, shallow bays of lakes or slow-moving streams with heavy vegetation, shallow lakes, & ponds. ONT.
45. Ictalurus nebulosus, 8-14" (203-356 mm), Brown Bullhead, Marbled Bullhead, Common Bullhead, Common Catfish, Mud Cat, Horned Pout, & Minister. Warm, shallow ponds, small lakes, and slow-moving streams with heavy vegetation. NS, NB, PQ, ONT, MB, SK (BC through introduction).
46. Ictalurus punctatus, 14-21" (356-533 mm), Channel Catfish. Large lakes & rivers. PQ, ONT, & MB.
47. Noturus flavus, 6-8" (152-203 mm), Stonecat, Stone Cat Madtom, White Cat, Doogler, & Beetle-eye. Shallow lakes & large streams. PQ, ONT, MB, & AB.
48. Noturus gyrinus, 3.5" (90 mm), Tadpole Madtom, Madtom, Tadpole Stone Cat & Tadpole Cat. Clear, quiet, shallow, slow-moving streams, lakes, sloughs, & ponds. PQ, ONT, MB, & SK.
49. Noturus miurus, 2-3" (51-76 mm), Brindled Madtom, Madtom, & Brindled Stonecat. Clear, fast-flowing streams, ONT.
50. Fundulus diaphanus, 3" (76 mm), Banded Killifish, Mummichog, Greyback, Freshwater Killie, Top Minnow, Memona Killifish, & Barred Minnow. Quiet, shallow lakes & ponds. Nfld, NS, NB, PEI, PQ, ONT, & (MB, one report only, in 1954).
51. Fundulus heteroclitus, 3" (76 mm), Mummichog, Common Killie, Saltwater Minnow, Mummy, Chub, & Common Mummichog. Salt-marsh flats, warm, quiet tidal areas, heavily vegetated waters. Nfld, PEI, NB, NS, & PQ.

52. Labidesthes sicculus, 3" (76 mm), Brook Silversides, Skipjack, & Silversides. Clear, heavily vegetated streams & small lakes. NFLD, PEI, NB, NS, & PQ. ONT.
53. Apeltes quadracus, 2-2½" (51-64 mm), Four-spine Stickleback, Pinfish, Mud Pouch, Mud Perch, & Bloody Stickleback. Brackish coastal areas and inland lakes & streams. NFLD, PEI, NS, NB, & PQ.
54. Culasa inconstans, 2" (51 mm), Five-spine Stickleback, Six-spine Stickleback, & Common Freshwater Stickleback. Clear, cold, heavily vegetated small streams and spring-fed ponds. NS, NB, PQ, ONT, MB, SK, AB, BC & NWT.
55. Gasterosteus aculeatus, 2" (51 mm), Three-spine Stickleback, Two-spine Stickleback, Banstickle, Sawfin Stickleback, Pinfish, Tiddler, Common Stickleback, European Stickleback, Eastern Stickleback, & New York Stickleback. Brackish to fresh water, shallow tidal marshes, creeks, & pools. NFLD, NB, NS, PEI, PQ, ONT, MB, & BC. LAB, NWT.
56. Gasterosteus wheatlandi, 2" (51 mm), Black-spotted Stickleback, Two-spine Stickleback. Brackish to fresh water, heavily vegetated shallows. Along shore lines among seaweed. NFLD, NS, PEI, NB, & PQ. NF, NS.
57. Pungitius pungitius, 2.5" (64 mm), Nine-spine Stickleback, Ten-spine Stickleback, Pinfish, & Tiny Burnstickle. Brackish to fresh water, shallow lakes, pools, ponds. NFLD, PEI, NB, NS, PQ, ONT, MB, SK, AB, BC, YUK, & NWT, LAB.
58. Percopsis omiscomaycus, 3-4" (76-102 mm), Trout-perch, Silver Chub. Larger lakes, but spawns in streams. PQ, ONT, MB, SK, AB, BC, YUK, & NWT.
59. Morone americanus, 5-7" (127-178 mm), White Perch, Narrow-mouthed Bass, Silver Perch, Sea Perch, & Gatte. Brackish coastal waters, inland lakes & ponds. PEI, NS, NB, PQ, & ONT.
60. Ambloplites rupestris, 6-10" (152-254 mm), Rock Bass, Red Eye, Goggle-eye. Rocky shores of shallow lakes and streams. PQ, ONT, MB, & SK.
61. Lepomis auritus, 5-7" (127-178 mm), Red-breasted Sunfish, Longear Sunfish, & Longears. Rocky streams, lake shores or shallow lakes with abundant vegetation. NB.
62. Lepomis cyanellus, 5" (127 mm), Green Sunfish, Green Perch. Clear to turbid waters of shallow lakes, streams, ponds, and drainage systems. ONT.
63. Lepomis gibbosus, 7-9" (178-229 mm), Pumpkinseed, Yellow Sunfish, Common Sunfish, Sunny, Punky, Sun Bass, and Pond Perch. NB, PQ, ONT, MB, & BC. AB.

64. Lepomis macrochirus, 7-8" (178-203 mm), Bluegill, Northern Bluegill, Common Bluegill, Blue Sunfish, Bream, Blue Bream, & Roach. Warm, shallow, well vegetated waters of lakes, ponds, slow-moving rivers, or larger creeks. PQ,ONT.
65. Lepomis megalotus, 3-6" (76-152 mm), Longear Sunfish, Great Lakes Sunfish, & Northern Longear. Shallow rivers, ponds, and small lakes with heavy vegetation. PQ, ONT.
66. Pomoxis annularis, 8-10" (203-254 mm), White Crappie, Crawpie, Silver Bass, & White Bass. Streams, lakes, & ponds with heavy vegetation. Larger, slow-moving rivers and weedy lake bays. ONT.
67. Pomoxis nigromaculatus, 7-10" (178-254 mm), Black Crappie, Crawpie, Calico Bass, Strawberry Bass, Speckled Bass, Grass Bass, Oswego Bass, Shiner, & Moonfish. Clear, quiet, heavily vegetated waters. Large ponds, small lakes, or shallow bays of larger lakes & flowing rivers. PQ,ONT,MB,BC.
68. Perca flavescens, 4-10" (102-254 mm), Yellow Perch, Lake Perch, & American Perch. Large lakes and ponds or quiet rivers. NS, NB, PQ, ONT, SK, AB, BC, & NWT.
69. Ammocrypta pellucida, 2.5" (64 mm), Eastern Sand Darter, Sand Darter. Streams, rivers, and sandy shoals of lakes. PQ,ONT
70. Etheostoma blennioides, 3" (76 mm), Greenside Darter. Streams, rivers, and lake shoals. ONT.
71. Etheostoma caeruleum, 2" (51 mm), Rainbow Darter, Blue Darter, Banded Darter, & Rainbowfish. Clear, shallow waters of streams. ONT.
72. Etheostoma exile, 2" (51 mm), Iowa Darter, Weed Darter, & Yellow-Belly. Clear, standing, or slow-moving rivers & streams, ponds, & small lakes with rooted vegetation. PQ, ONT, MB, SK, & AB.
73. Etheostoma flabellare, 2" (51 mm), Fantail Darter. Small, shallow streams. PQ & ONT.
74. Etheostoma microperca, 1" (25 mm), Least Darter. Quiet, weedy waters, small lakes, and slow streams. ONT.
75. Etheostoma nigrum, 2.3" (58 mm), Johnny Darter. Slow to still waters, weedy streams & ponds. PQ, ONT, MB, & SK.
76. Percina caprodes, 3.5" (89 mm), Log Perch, Zebra Fish, & Manitou Darter. Lakes, lake beaches, & rivers. PQ,ONT,MB,SK.
77. Percina copelandi, 1.5" (38 mm), Channel Darter, Copeland's Darter. Slow rivers & streams, sandy lake shores. PQ & ONT.

CANADIAN FISH, cont'd.

78. Percina maculata, 2.3" (58 mm), Black-sided Darter.  
Clear to turbid streams and ponds. ONT, MB, & SK.
79. Percina shumardi, 2.3" (58 mm), River Darter. Large  
rivers & lakes. ONT & MB.
80. Cottus aleuticus, 3-4" (76-102 mm), Coast Range Sculpin.  
Fastwater coastal rivers, streams, and brackish water  
or inland lakes. BC.
81. Cottus asper, 5-6" (127-152 mm), Prickly Sculpin.  
Coastal and inland streams, lake shores, & quiet waters. BC.
82. Cottus bairdi, 3" (76 mm). Mottled Sculpin, Miller's Thumb,  
Columbia Sculpin, Gudgeon, Freshwater Sculpin. Cool  
streams & lakes. LAB, PQ, ONT, MB, AB, & BC.
83. Cottus cognatus, 3" (76 mm), Slimy Sculpin, Miller's Thumb,  
Cockatouch, Slimy Muddler, Northern Sculpin, Stargazer,  
& Bear Lake Bullhead. Cool streams and deeper lakes.  
LAB, NB, PEI, PQ, ONT, MB, SK, AB, BC, YUK, NWT.
84. Cottus confusus, 4" (102 mm), Short-headed Sculpin. Small,  
cold streams and large rivers. BC.
85. Cottus rhotheus, 4" (102 mm), Torrent Sculpin. Streams  
& beaches of large lakes. BC.
86. Cottus ricei, 2-2½" (51-64 mm), Spoonhead Sculpin,  
Rice's Sculpin, & Spoonhead Muddler. Small, fast streams,  
turbid rivers, or inshore shallows of large lakes. PQ, ONT,  
MB, SK, AB, BC, YUK, & NWT.
87. Myoxocephalus quadricornis, 2-3" (51-76 mm), Deepwater  
Sculpin. Deepwater lakes. PQ, ONT, MB, SK, & NWT.

REF: Scott, W.B., and Crossman, E.J. 1973. Freshwater Fishes  
of Canada. Bulletin 184, Fisheries Research Board of  
Canada, Ottawa, 1973.

Lee, D.S., et al., 1980 et seq., Atlas of North American  
Freshwater Fishes. N.C. State Museum of Nat. Hist.,  
Raleigh.

Locations added by the latter have been retained and appear  
after a period in province listings. Locations deleted  
by Atlas have not been deleted here.

ORDER/FAMILY LISTING: Salmoniformes/Umbridae, No. 1; Cypriniformes/  
Cyprinidae, 2-42; Siluriformes/Ictaluridae, 43-49; Atheriniformes/  
Cyprinodontidae, 50 & 51; Atheriniformes/Atherinidae, 52-57;  
Percosiformes/Percopsidae, 58; Perciformes/Percichthyidae, 59;  
Perciformes/Centrarchidae, 60-67; Perciformes/Percidae, 68-79;  
Perciformes/Cottidae, 80-87.