

Bullhead



The Bullhead is a small fish (up to approximately 10cm) that have a characteristically large, flattened head, large fins and a tapering body. They live at the bottom of fast flowing rivers, in amongst the gravel where they feed. Bullhead are native to rivers across England and Wales but are an invasive species found in several rivers in Scotland, including the Tweed.

Bullhead in the Tweed

Bullhead were first reported in Scotland in the 1950's but it is only in 2017 that Bullhead were first recorded in the Tweed catchment. A population has become established in the Ale Water and it is likely that their introduction was accidental as they have no value as a food source or for fishing.

What Does It Mean?

The Bullhead is a predatory fish species and will feed on fish eggs and other small fish, including juvenile Salmon and Trout. They have also been shown to displace other species of fish, including Trout and Beardie's (Stone Loach), through competition for space and food. The presence of Bullhead in a river can therefore have negative implications for the presence and abundance of other fish species and it's arrival brings a new and unpredictable factor for the fish and the fisheries of the Tweed.

What Can Be Done?

Once a population of a non-native aquatic species becomes established it is very difficult to eradicate them. This is unfortunately the case with the Bullhead population in the Ale Water. We have however been carrying out electro-fishing to monitor their presence and spread throughout the Ale Water.

If you spot a Bullhead anywhere in the Tweed catchment, then please get in touch with the Tweed Foundation using the contact details below. These are a potentially damaging species of fish and one we do not want throughout the catchment.

The Tweed Foundation
Drygrange Steading, Melrose, Roxburghshire, TD69DJ
Tel: 01896 848271
Email: info@tweedfoundation.org.uk