

Burbot

Lota lota

Presented by: Jason Sauve



Taxonomy

- Class - Actinopterygii
- Order - Gadiformes (Codfishes)
- Family - Lotidae (Ling and Rocklings)
- Genus - Lota
- Species - lota

Identification and Characteristics

- Brown, yellow, or black with dark, mottled blotches on top of fish
- Cream or yellow on stomach
- Scales so numerous and fine that most specimens feel scaleless
- No adipose fin
- Terminal mouth that is wide and horizontal

Key Features

- Anal fin and second dorsal extend almost to tail
- Single barbel on chin
- Have pelvic fins
- Two dorsal fins



Similar species



- Bowfin
- American Eel

Breeding

- Spawn in mid winter to early spring under the ice
- Spawning site is usually sand or gravel
- Spawn in pairs or balls
- No nest or parental care
- Egg numbers range 6300 to nearly 3,500,000
- Some spawn right here in Sault Ste. Marie

Mating

- Either a male/female pair is formed, or fish congregate in large ball
- Gametes are released
- Fertilized eggs drift away
- No parental care
- Can be sexually mature at 1 year

Habitat

- Juvenile fish live in shallow, littoral zones
- Adults prefer deep, cold water
- Usually below the thermocline
- Adults make extensive burrows in the substrate
- South of the 49th parallel, Burbot are only found in deep, oligotrophic lakes

- Holarctic distribution



Diet

- Newly hatched fish are entirely planktivorous
- Juveniles feed on molluscs and insect larvae
- Adults in Lake Superior consume 99% fish
- Top predators
 - Diets overlap Northern Pike and Large salmonids
- Feeding habits indiscriminate; rocks, plastic, wood chips and other inert materials found

Human Impacts/Interesting Facts

- World record is 25lb, 2oz from Lake Diefenbaker, Saskatchewan
- International Eelpout Festival in Walker, MI
- No release, catch and kill in Flaming Gorge Reservoir, Utah
- Livers six times larger than other freshwater fish
 - Helped found a pharmaceutical company

Poor Man's Lobster

