

Goldfish

Carassius auratus



Widespread in farm dams throughout Tasmania.

Description: A small, plump, deep bodied fish. The head is blunt with moderately large eyes and a small toothless protrusible mouth. There are no barbels present. Scales are large and there is a spine on the dorsal and anal fins. The dorsal fin is long based and high at the front.

Colour: Goldfish show considerable colour variation in captivity. In the wild they usually revert to their natural colour of light to dark olive green. Fins are mostly see through. Orange-red varieties often seen in aquariums are occasionally found in wild populations.

Size: May grow to around 3 kg, but specimens of over 250 g are rare in Tasmania.

Habitat: Goldfish are able to survive short periods of entirely anoxic (oxygen free) conditions. They can also tolerate a wide range of temperatures and prefer still or slow-moving water.

Diet: They are opportunistic omnivores, feeding on a mixed diet of algae and invertebrates.

Life Cycle: Breeding usually happens after a significant temperature change, often in Spring. Goldfish, like all cyprinids, are egg-layers. Their eggs are adhesive and attach to aquatic vegetation. The eggs hatch within 48 to 72 hours. Within a week or so, the fry begin to look like a goldfish, but may take a year to develop mature goldfish colour.

Distribution status: Introduced in 1860s as ornamental fish.

Original range: Native to Asia but is now found world-wide because of its use as an aquarium (ornamental) fish.

Reasons for change to distribution: The spread of goldfish is due to unauthorised transport and release of pet fish.

Legal status: **Pest** (though not in legislation).

Can it be taken? If taken by rod and line it must be destroyed. Under the Inland Fisheries Act live fish must not be transported to another water, which includes dams and aquariums.

Other names: Asian carp (collective name for this and similar species).



Illustration Alexis Beckett

BLI2080