

Cultus' Very Own Fish

Nowhere else in the world can you find the Cultus Pygmy Sculpin. This little fish is a SARA listed species (Species At Risk Act).

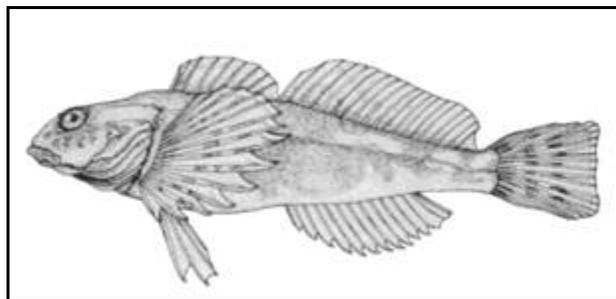
No Beauty Contest

The Cultus pygmy sculpin is about 5 cm (~2in) long and kind of looks like a larva or a juvenile sculpin. The fish runs brown to grey on top, has dark blotches and is more or less white on the bottom. Spawning males are darker coloured and boast an orange band on the first dorsal fin. The species has a large head, heavy body and a variety of fins.

Due to its limited range and isolation, the Cultus pygmy sculpin is highly vulnerable to change. The introduction of non-native species to Cultus Lake in particular may pose a threat. The sculpin also has native predators, most notably the Dolly Varden (*Salvelinus malma*) or the Bull Trout (I can't tell the difference, even if they are), which also lives in the lake's deep waters.



Picture courtesy of Silvia Letay, BC Ministry of Environment



Picture courtesy of Dr. Rolph Schluter, Dept. of Zoology, UBC

What's being done

The Cultus pygmy sculpin is protected under the federal Species at Risk Act (SARA). A recovery strategy is completed and action plan is under development. DFO staff have presented to CLASS to talk about the Recovery Strategy and are having a technical meeting with scientists before they have a workshop with CLASS.

Why worry about an ugly little fish?

If this little fish can't make it due to human impacts, neither will the lake stay healthy, nor the humans or the property values. It is all connected. The economies of hosting 3 million visitors per year plus the quality of life for residents depends on healthy, wonderful lake water.

What can you do?

The Cultus pygmy sculpin will get the protection it needs only if all of us work together to reduce threats. Reducing man-made threats will also benefit common interests of land value, healthy shorelines and salmon. You are invited to do your best to reduce these threats wherever possible to better protect the sculpin's critical habitat. Get involved with the Cultus Lake Aquatic Stewards that meet on the last Weds of every month at either the Lab or Parks Board.



More on doing

Action Plan Workshop and Technical Workshop

DFO held an Action Plan Workshop on Feb. 23rd, 2011, in cooperation with CLASS, to brainstorm ideas for the recovery actions of the Cultus Pygmy Sculpin. CLASS participants, residents and business owners participated.

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