

Dace

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Species Description

Scientific name: *Leuciscus leuciscus*

AKA: Darsen, Graining, Hasel

Native to: Europe; excluding Scotland and Ireland

Habitat: Prefer fast flowing and well-oxygenated rivers and streams, often gathers in large shoals in shady areas.

Dace are a small, slim bodied freshwater fish. They usually grow 10 - 15 cm (maximum reported length of 40 cm) in length and weight 50 – 150g (maximum reported weight 1kg). Their backs are olive green in colour and they have bright silver flanks with a white belly. They have a translucent grey forked tail and dorsal fin, whilst the fins on its underside range in colour from a brown-yellow to pale pink. Dace have a concave curve on the back edge of their fins.

They are omnivorous, feeding on invertebrates, fish eggs, plants and seeds. Dace produce many offspring, have a fast growth rate and are considered tolerant of anthropogenic pressures. They have an average lifespan of 8 -16 years.

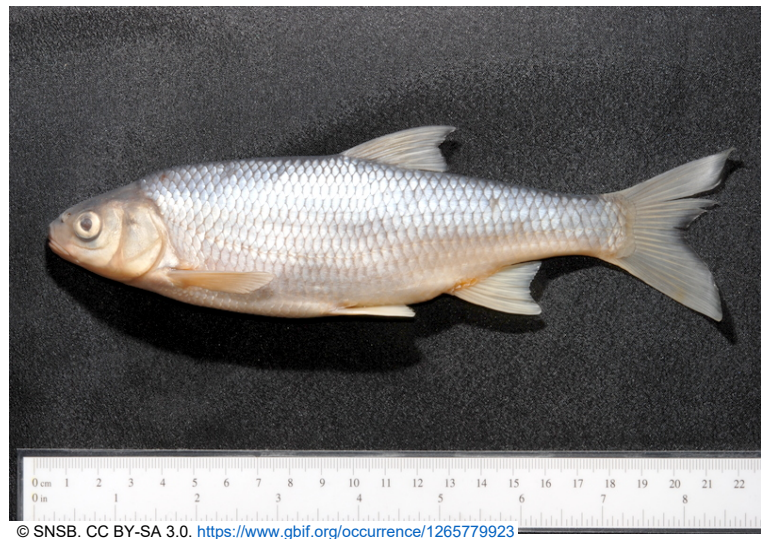
Dace are not present in Northern Ireland. They are present in Ireland but are generally confined to the River Barrow and Cork Blackwater where they were introduced through the accidental release of bait fish by pike anglers. Its subsequent spread to other watercourses has probably been expedited by further illegal releases by coarse anglers wanting to improve or create fishing opportunities.

In areas where they are established, populations can out-compete native fish for food and habitat, especially in salmonid rivers where they can invade gravel spawning beds.

As Dace is not ordinarily resident in Northern Ireland, under The Invasive Alien Species (Enforcement and Permitting) Order (Northern Ireland) 2019, it is an offence to release or allow this species to escape into the wild.

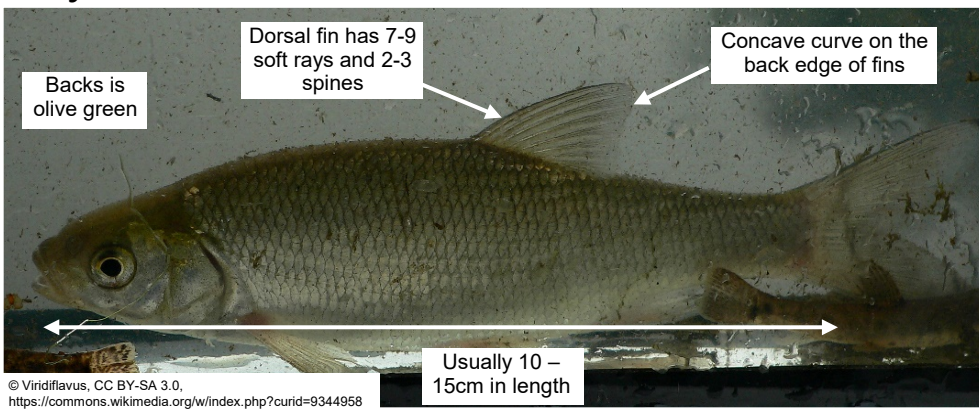


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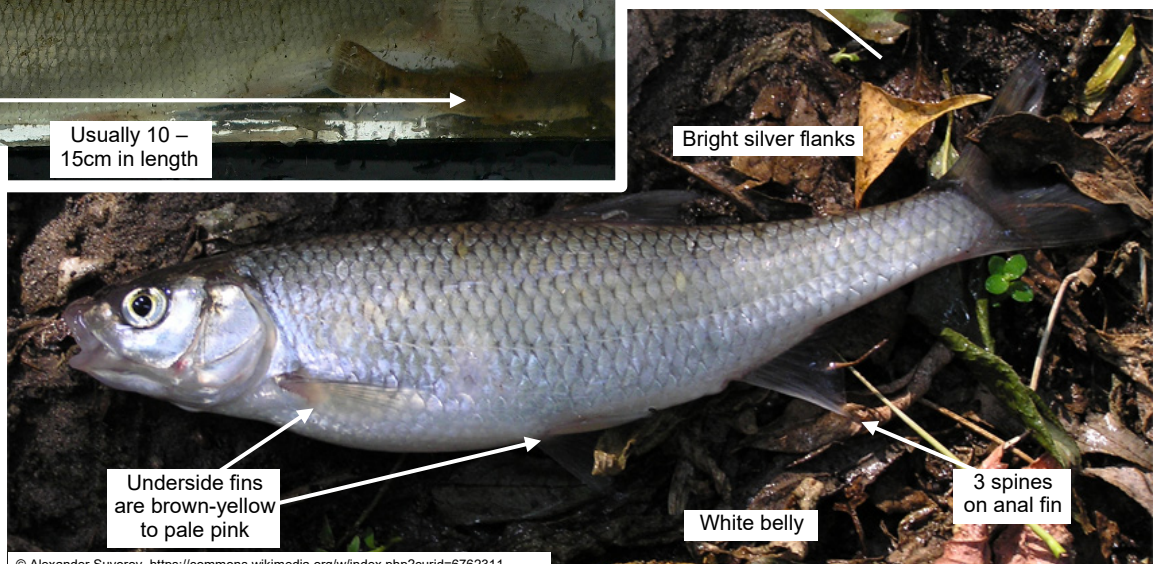
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Key ID Features



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Translucent
grey forked tail
and dorsal fin

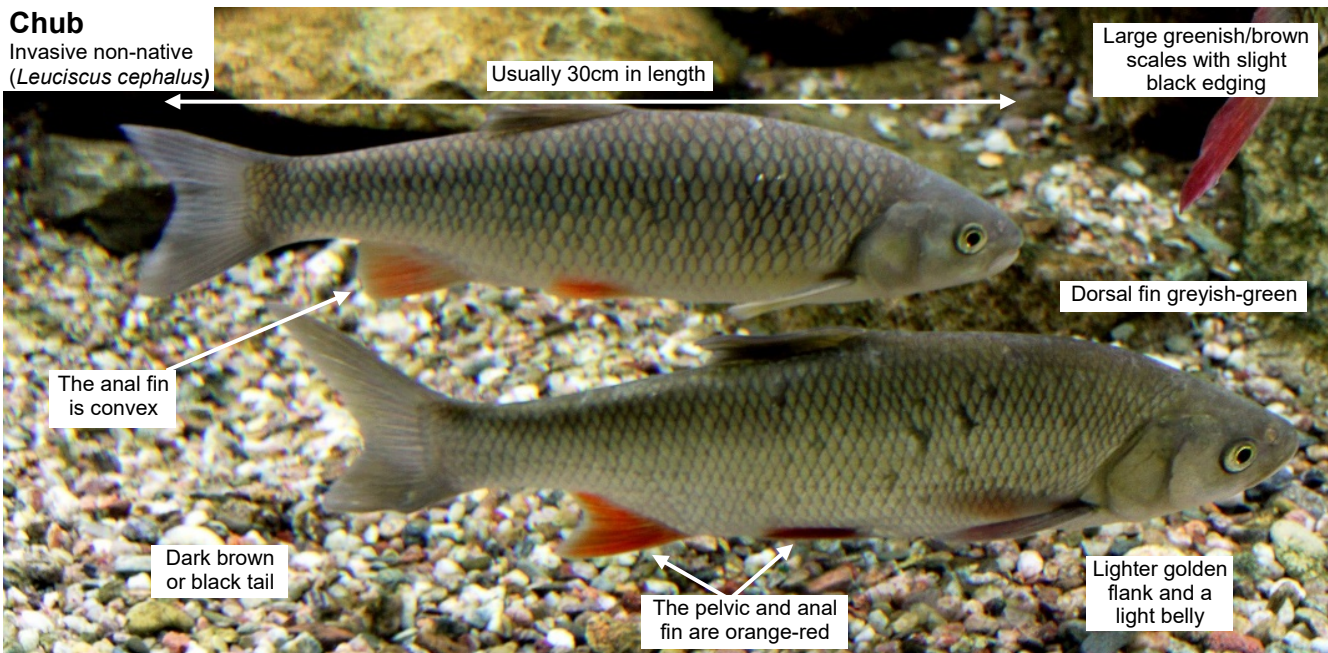


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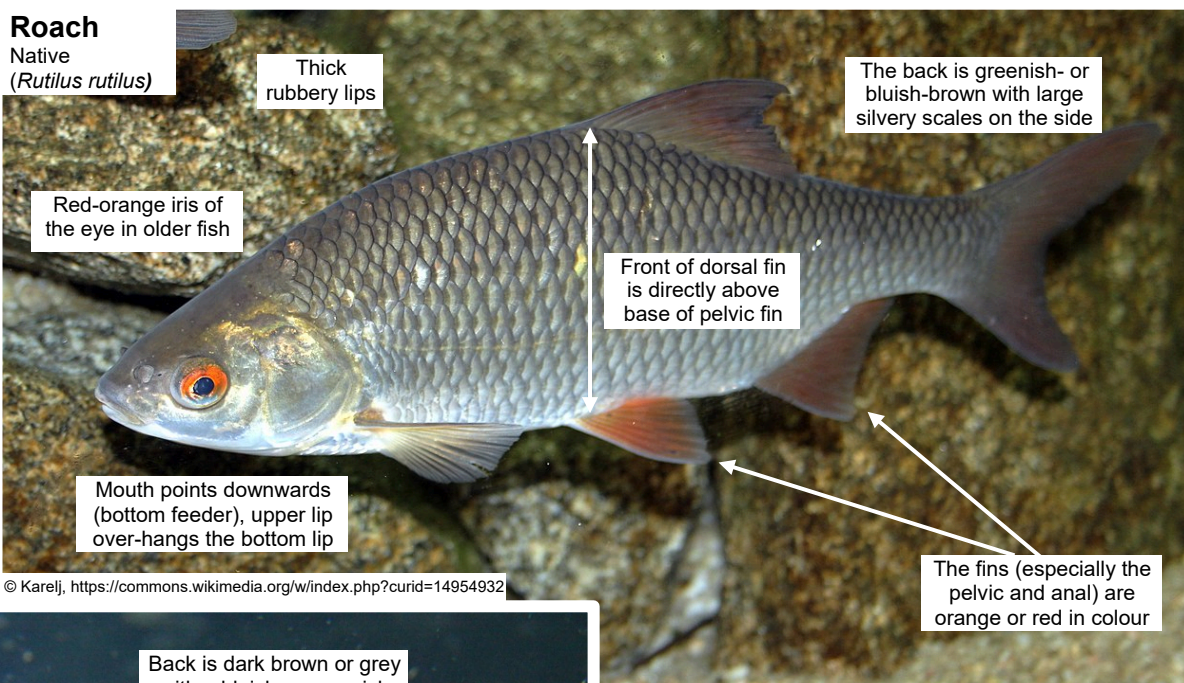
Report any sightings via; CEDaR Online Recording - <https://www2.habitas.org.uk/records/ISI>, iRecord app or Invasive Species Northern Ireland website - <http://invasivespeciesni.co.uk/report-sighting>

Similar Species

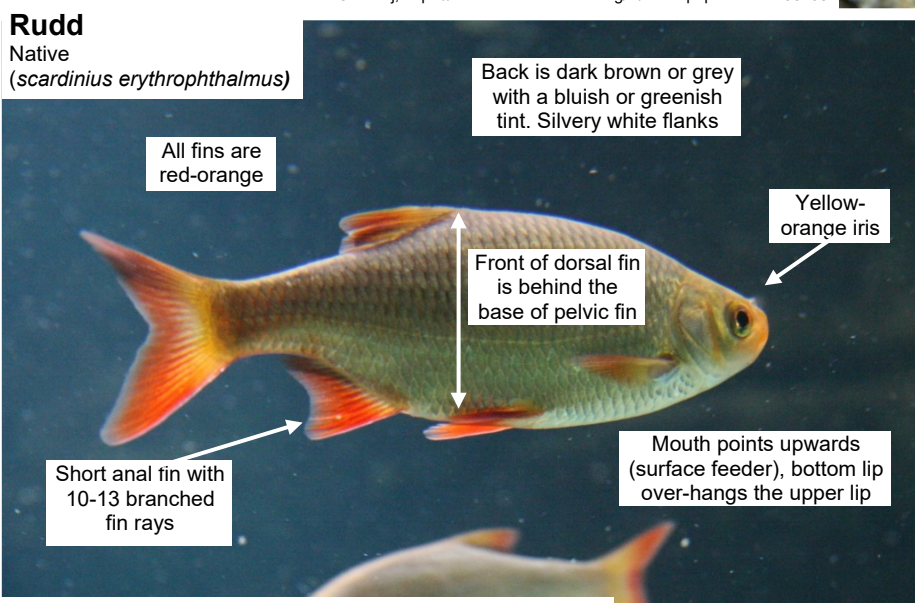
Chub Invasive non-native (*Leuciscus cephalus*)



Roach Native (*Rutilus rutilus*)



Rudd Native (*scardinius erythrophthalmus*)



Roach and rudd are similar in appearance. They can be differentiated by the relative positions of the dorsal and pelvic fins. However, the roach interbreeds readily with both rudd and bream.

References and further reading:

CADI *Leuciscus leuciscus* (common dace) data sheet - <https://www.cabi.org/isc/datasheet/77316>
Caffrey JM; Hayden B; Walsh T, 2007. Dace (*Leuciscus leuciscus* L.): an invasive fish species in Ireland. Irish Freshwater Fisheries, Ecology and Management, No. 5. Dublin, Ireland: Central Fisheries Board.

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