

BLUEGILL

Lepomis macrochirus



Aquatic Invasive Species: Control and Prevention

Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) impede recreation, degrade water quality, and, once established, are very difficult to control. There currently are invasive plants, invertebrates, mollusks, and fish in Lake Tahoe. Partner organizations around the lake have been implementing preventative measures to ensure that additional AIS are not introduced. Species of the highest concern that are not currently present in the Tahoe Basin include Zebra mussels, Quagga mussels, and New Zealand mudsnails. A dedicated, diverse group of partner agencies, including the TahoeRCD, University of Nevada-Reno, University of California-Davis, and the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency have collaborated to prevent, monitor, and control AIS in Lake Tahoe.

How did bluegills get here?

Bluegill are the most abundant member of the sunfish family in the area and have become one of the Lake Tahoe's native fish's main competitors. They are one of the two most common warm water fish in Lake Tahoe, along with Largemouth bass. First noticed by people in the 1970s, the fish most likely introduced by anglers interested in catching a new species.



Origin: Eastern half of North America

Means of Introduction: Anglers; dumping

Habitat: Warm water under vegetative cover; move into deeper water when water temperatures increase

Reproduction: Typically spawn when water reaches 70 degrees Fahrenheit, nest in shallows; long spawning season, high reproductive potential

Characteristics: Sunfish-shaped body, blue or black "ear" (gill extension), round body, vertical bars on sides

Size: Maximum length of 16 inches (40 cm)

Food: Small invertebrates and very small fish

Why is it a threat to the Tahoe Basin?

- ⊗ Competes with native fish for food and space; has the
- ⊗ potential to alter Lake Tahoe's natural ecology.
- ⊗ If left unchecked, bluegills could threaten Lake Tahoe's cold water fishery.
- ⊗ Proliferation may be accelerated by a warming climate.

Current Management

Monitoring techniques are being utilized in Lake Tahoe to prevent Bluegill from establishing large populations.

Research: Tracing movements of bluegill to find out how and where the fish move in order to track the further spread of invasive fish around the lake.



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