

SPECIES INFORMATION SHEET

Cottus poecilopus

English name: Alpine bullhead	Scientific name: <i>Cottus poecilopus</i>	
Taxonomical group: Class: Actinopterygii Order: Scorpaeniformes Family: Cottidae	Species authority: Heckel, 1837	
Subspecies, Variations, Synonyms: –	Generation length: 3.5 years	
Past and current threats (Habitats Directive article 17 codes): –	Future threats (Habitats Directive article 17 codes): Eutrophication (K02.03)	
IUCN Criteria: –	HELCOM Red List Category:	NA Not Applicable
Global / European IUCN Red List Category: LC	Habitats Directive: –	
Previous HELCOM Red List Category (2007): VU		
Protection and Red List status in HELCOM countries: Denmark –/LC, Estonia –/–, Finland –/LC, Germany –/0 (Extinct, freshwaters), Latvia –/–, Lithuania –/–, Poland –/NT, Russia –/–, Sweden –/LC		

Distribution and status in the Baltic Sea region

The Alpine bullhead is distributed in northern Sweden and Finland between 64 and 68°N and in central lake areas and a few streams in southern part of Sweden and Finland. It is also distributed in northern Poland, Lake Ladoga and southern Lake Onega basins, a few lakes in northern Germany (extirpated), Lake Hańcza in Poland and Skjernaa drainage in Denmark. It is a freshwater species and rarely recorded in the Bothnian Sea and Bothnian Bay.



Cottus poecilopus, Alpine bullhead (photo: Wikimedia commons)

Habitat and ecology

This species inhabits northern and mountain and foothill streams, and oligotrophic lakes. It thrives in fast-flowing waters of coastal streams, rivers, inland lakes, usually on stony bottoms (Fedorov 1986).

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The Alpine bullhead feeds on algae (diatoms, desmids, blue-green algae), polychaetes, crustaceans, aquatic insect larvae and nymphs (Ephemeroptera, Trichoptera, Plecoptera, Chironomidae), fish eggs and larvae.

Description of major threats

Like *C. gobio* this species is most likely also threatened by eutrophication, as the species needs clean water and sediments, especially for spawning, egg deposition, and larval habitats.

Assessment justification

The alpine bullhead is a freshwater species, which neither reproduces within the Baltic Sea or Kattegat nor has a significant part of the population spending significant time in this area. Therefore the species does not fulfil the criteria for being assessed according to the IUCN system and is considered Not Applicable (NA) for assessment.

Recommendations for actions to conserve the species

No protection actions currently needed in the HELCOM area but information on records of the species should be collected.

Common names

D -Sibirische Groppe; GB – Alpine bullhead; DK - Finnestribet ferskvandsulk; FIN – Kirjoeväsimppu; LV - Raibā platgalve; LT -Rabapelekiš kūjagalvis; PL -Głowacz przęgopłetwy; RUS -Pestronogij bychok; S – Bergsimpa

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