

## **Don't Let It Loose!** - Goldfish, *Carassius auratus*



*Where does the species originate from?*

Nope, not the pet store. Goldfish are native to eastern and central Asia, and were originally bred from Prussian carp (*Carassius auratus gibelio*) more than a thousand years ago. Centuries of selective breeding has created all of the wacky color and body shapes that can be found in fish bowls around the globe.

*How are they introduced and spread?*

Goldfish have been farmed for live bait, intentionally stocked as forage fish, and sold world-wide for display in outdoor ponds, water gardens, and aquariums. Goldfish are often purchased as pets then released into the wild or flushed down a toilet when owners can no longer care for them.

*Environmental impact:*

Goldfish are very greedy, opportunistic eaters. In the wild, goldfish consume everything from plants to aquatic insects, small snails and crustaceans. The rooting and foraging behavior of goldfish can increase water turbidity and reduce the abundance of aquatic vegetation. Goldfish may displace or outcompete native species for common food resources, introduce disease to native fish populations (goldfish ulcer disease), and can successfully hybridize with common carp – another problematic fish species.

*Goldfish facts:*

- A group of goldfish is known as a “troubling”.
- Goldfish can tan in the sun just like humans.
- Goldfish have a memory-span of at least three months and can differentiate shapes, colors and sounds.

**Don't Let It Loose!** Those beautiful bright colors that goldfish are so famous for make them very conspicuous and more susceptible to predation in the wild – not a very fond farewell for your fishy friend!