

BROAD WHITEFISH

MY SCIENTIFIC NAME

Coregonus nasus

BY THE NUMBERS

96,000 Number of eggs a large female can lay

35 Age in years of the oldest documented Broad Whitefish.

67 Length in centimeters of longest specimen recorded (over two feet)!

DID YOU KNOW?



Broads are one of six whitefish species common in Alaska.

HOW TO IDENTIFY ME

From back to belly my body is very broad and my face blunt and meatier compared to other whitefish. My mouth is very small and slightly down-turned. We average ~4.5-11 pounds.

WHY I MATTER

I'm an important food source for rural Alaska residents, especially Alaska Natives.

STATUS

Unknown due to lack of biological and harvest information.

- Most Broad Whitefish are **amphidromous**, meaning they reproduce in freshwater then drift into the ocean as larvae before migrating back into freshwater to grow into adults and spawn.
- They are **iteroparous**, meaning they're capable of spawning more than once.
- Most Broads reach maturity between 5-8 years old.
- Broads are an important food source for people living along the Arctic Coastal Plain and Yukon and Kuskokwim rivers.
- Spawning areas are vulnerable: they are small in size and a large fraction of the population gathers there each fall. Disturbance (e.g., mining the gravel substrate) could destroy an entire population.



Fish illustration by Laury Zicari, USFWS, Retired.



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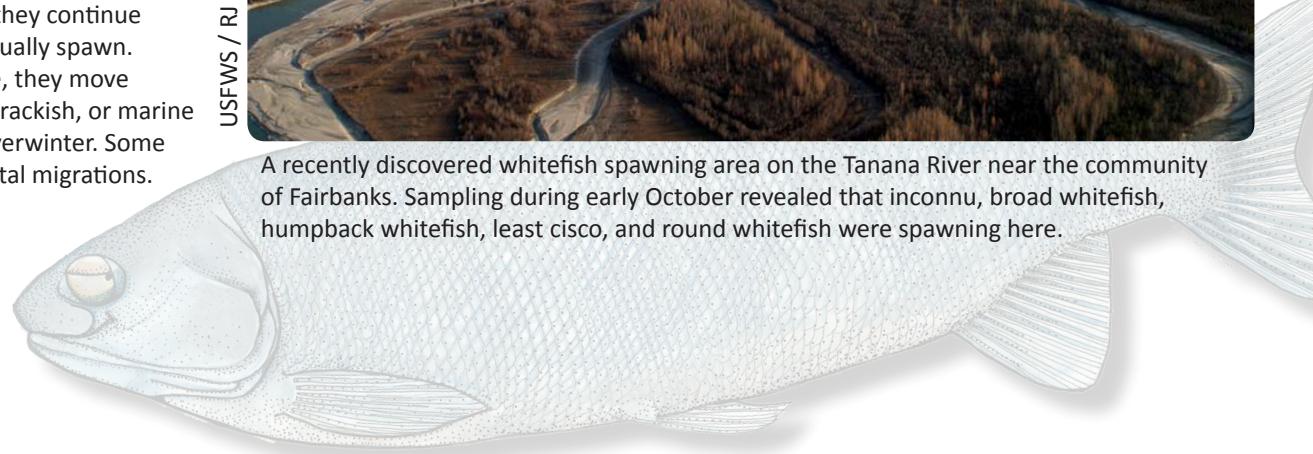
LIFE CYCLE

Not all Broad Whitefish spawn every year. Spawning occurs from fall to early winter. They congregate over gravel and release eggs and **milt** (sperm). The eggs are heavier than water, so they sink to the bottom and lodge in the gravel. In spring, eggs hatch, then larvae drift downstream to feeding areas in estuaries and shallow nearshore coastal waters of the Bering and Chukchi seas. They then move back upriver where they continue to mature and eventually spawn. Throughout their life, they move among freshwater, brackish, or marine water to feed and overwinter. Some make extensive coastal migrations.

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A recently discovered whitefish spawning area on the Tanana River near the community of Fairbanks. Sampling during early October revealed that inconnu, broad whitefish, humpback whitefish, least cisco, and round whitefish were spawning here.



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A Broad Whitefish from Alaska's Kuskokwim River. Note the downturned mouth (ideal for picking insect larvae, crustaceans, and mollusks off the bottom).



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YOU CAN HELP ME

Get to know me, if you don't already. Help make me visible to people who don't have the chance to see me by sharing your stories about me. Get involved in efforts to help conserve my habitat and maintain my populations into the future.

