

Bullhead (*Cottus gobio*)

Aka Miller's Thumb

Size: 8 to 12cm



Carnivore - Bullheads feed on small crustacea, invertebrates (especially insect larvae), fish eggs and small fry (even their own young!).

Breathes using gills. Water taken into mouth and forced over filaments with large surface area to maximise diffusion.

Lies under stones during day with excellent camouflage. Spiny dorsal fin, spines on pelvic fin and backward-curved spines projecting from each side of broad head all together make it very difficult to swallow by predators (brown trout, grey heron, kingfisher). Male guards up to 250 sticky, yellow eggs until they hatch but then abandons them and may even eat them if come too close. Adapted to river bed where current is slower. Adults possess no swim bladder, meaning that they naturally sink in the water. Colonisation upstream of new environments will only occur slowly as the adults move very little, having a range of just 10m.