



Typical range in length for adults: 4 – 7.5 cm

Maximum length: 10 cm

Typical range in weight for adults: 0.7 – 4 g

Maximum weight: 10 g

What do they look like?

This small, slender fish gets its name from the gold or brassy colour of its sides. Males have a deeper colour than the females, particularly during breeding season. The back is olive-green and the belly is creamy white. A dark band is usually visible along the side of the fish. It has larger scales than most other minnows. Females tend to be larger than males.

Where do they live?

Brassy minnows live in small, sluggish, weedy creeks or streams with sand, gravel, or mud bottoms. They can also be found in boggy lakes, sloughs, ditches, and in overflow ponds near rivers or in brackish or tidally influenced water. In the winter they use pools and deep runs under shelter or buried in debris. They prefer cooler water than some of their minnow cousins and are only found in large numbers when predators (both fish and birds) are absent.

Brassy minnows are found from the upper St. Lawrence River in New York, west through southern Ontario, Manitoba, and Saskatchewan and south into the north central part of the U.S. as far south as Colorado. The range extends into the southeastern corner of Alberta. Separate populations are found in B.C. Brassy minnows live in isolated areas in the lower Fraser Valley, the Nechako Lowland, and possibly in the Horsefly drainage near Quesnel Lake. This kind of patchy distribution may indicate that at one time they were found in locations between these sites.

What do they eat?

This small fish feeds on algae, plankton, insects and other invertebrates found in surface drift and bottom ooze. The brassy minnow is primarily a vegetarian, but eats the small organisms associated with the algae as it grazes.

What is their life cycle like?

Individuals become sexually mature at the age of 1 or 2 years. In the Prince George area spawning occurs in June and July. They usually lay their eggs in late spring among the vegetation in shallow areas of streams or lakes, adjoining lagoons and in flooded marshes. A single female may lay from about 150 to 600 eggs

Prince Charlone Charles City

Distribution

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Montana

depending on her size. The eggs are scattered on vegetation and on the bottom. The eggs take from 7-10 days to hatch. Females may live longer than males but none appear to live beyond 3 years.

How are they doing?

The brassy minnow is on the Blue List in B.C, so is considered to be at risk in the province. Some of the populations in central B.C. have disappeared altogether, while others live in water bodies susceptible to urban pollution and habitat problems.

How you can help:

- Never transport live fish or other organisms from one body of water to another. This could transfer diseases and parasites from one ecosystem to another, or upset the natural balance in the ecosystem where they are released.
- Be aware that what you dump down the sink or into your septic tank, roadside storm drains or sewers may find its way into streams. Help keep water quality high by using detergents and soaps minimally and by not
 - dumping harsh chemicals, such as bleach, paint thinners or antifreeze, into drains.
 - Form a group of water stewards and volunteers to monitor local water quality and the quality of riparian habitats.

No kidding!

- Brassy minnows were not discovered in B.C. until 1953.
- This small fish, although rare in B.C., has been described as the most abundant minnow in Minnesota.
- At one time it was thought to be an introduced species in B.C., but since new populations have been discovered, it is now believed to be native.



