



### **63. BARBEL / BARBE (Barbus barbus)**

**IDENTIFICATION:** The barbel has an elongated body and an inferior mouth. The upper jaw extends beyond the lower one and has four barbels. The lips are thick and fleshy. Dorsal and anal fins are relatively short, and the tail fin is forked. The lower half of the dorsal fin is covered by tiny dark dots. The color varies greatly. The back and the head normally are gray-green, shading into lighter colors on the sides with a golden tinge, especially around the gill covers. The eye iris has a golden glitter. The pectoral, pelvic, and tail fins are gray-green at the base with a reddish tinge toward the tips. Some populations e.g. golden barbel may be entirely yellow.

**HABITAT:** The barbel is a bottom feeder dwelling in moderately flowing streams with sandy or gravelly bottoms. This gregarious fish haunts the bottom currents and searches for food even in the dark. During winter, barbels congregate in large schools in deep and quiet pools. Barbels are quite abundant where the lower region of larger stream offers the ideal habitat. This portion of the stream, the barbel region, extends from the grayling region downstream to the bream region.

#### **FOOD:**

**Diet:** Barbels are day and night feeders. They feed on worms, insect larvae, snails, mollusks, and fish spawn.

**Value:** The meat is very tasty, although bony. Barbels are very gamey and put up a good fight when hooked.

**SPAWNING:** Barbels spawn between April and May depending on the water temperature. They move upstream and scatter their sticky eggs over the gravelly bottom. **BARBEL EGGS ARE POISONOUS!**