



68. ROACH / ROTAUGE / PLOETZE (*Rutilus rutilus*)

IDENTIFICATION: The roach is a typical cyprinid with a humped back and lateral compression. The mouth is terminal or subinferior. The scales between the pelvic and anal fins are not keeled. The front edge of the dorsal fin is in line with the base of the pelvic fin, or, in rare cases, slightly to the rear. The tail fin is deeply forked. The back and the upper part of the head are dark gray with a bluish or greenish tint; the flanks are silver-white, becoming bright silver toward the belly. Pelvic and anal fins are bright red or orange; pectoral fins light gray and dorsal and tail fins are gray with pinkish tints. The iris is red. Roach are often confused with rudd.

HABITAT: Mostly in fresh waters. They are equally at home in ponds, lakes, and canals, as well as in rivers, with stagnant to moderately running waters. Roach are found in large numbers wherever they occur. They congregate in deep holes during summer days and frequently in weedy shallows at night. Large schools retire to deep pool in winter.

FOOD:

Diet: Zooplankton and algae are main diet for young roach. Adults eat mollusks, small crustaceans, worms, snails, and vegetation, as well as aquatic and terrestrial insects.

Value: The food value of roach is similar to that of rudd.

SPAWNING: Roach spawn from April to June in dense weed patches. The male acquired a breeding dress of spotty white tubercles on the forward part of the body. The splashy and gregarious courtship is often audible and visible. The female releases 100,000 eggs per pound of body weight. The eggs are sticky and adhere in masses to aquatic plants.