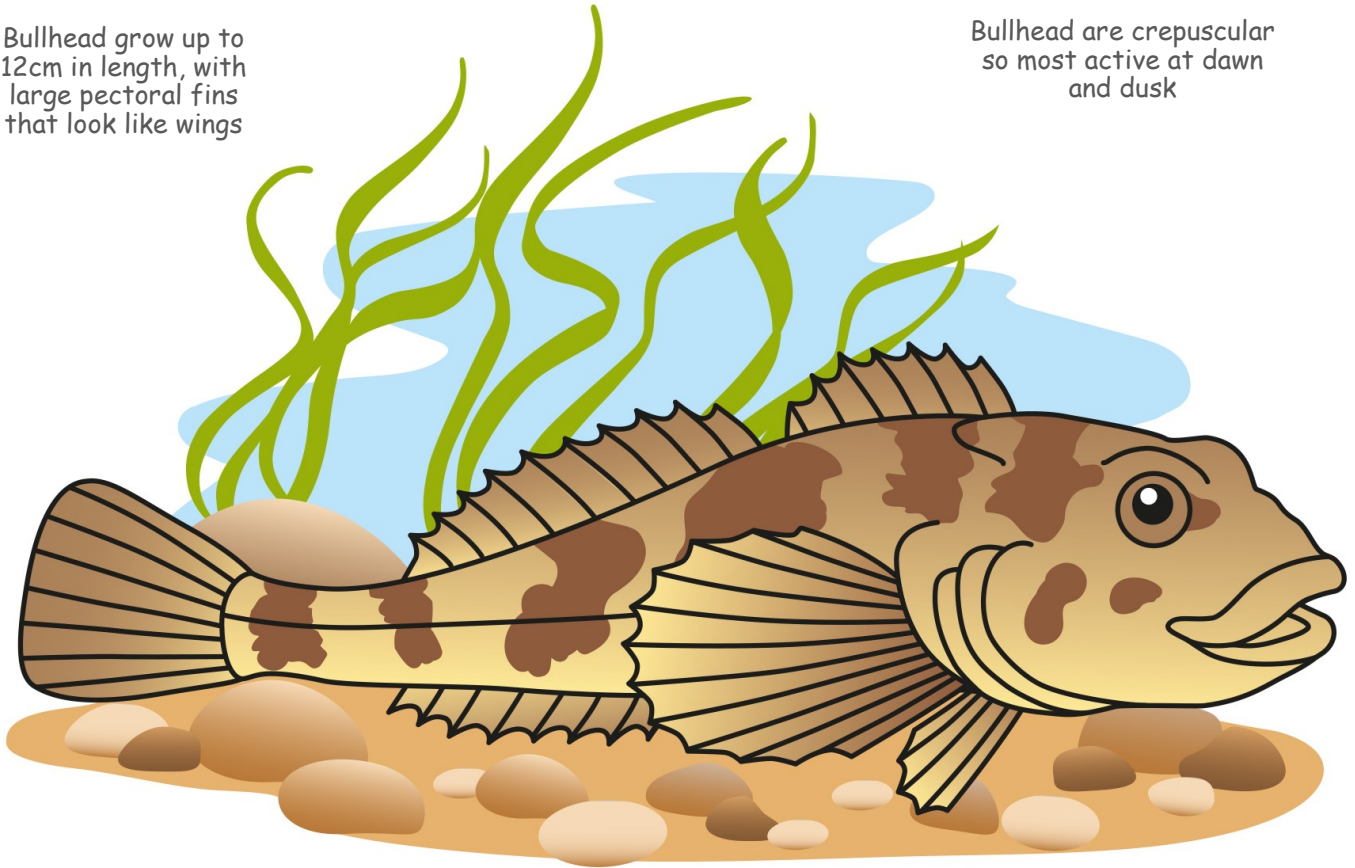


Bullhead

Bullhead grow up to 12cm in length, with large pectoral fins that look like wings

Bullhead are crepuscular so most active at dawn and dusk



The body is brown-beige in colour, which is ideal for hiding on the bottom of a river bed

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Their average life span is 3-5 years

- * The scientific name for Bullhead is *Cottus gobio*
- * Bullhead are a unique and distinctive little fish
- * The shape of their bodies gives them their nickname of "Miller's thumb"
- * They have a big head, a large wide mouth and a smaller body that narrows to the tail
- * They have big pectoral fins that look like wings
- * Bullhead are known as bottom dwellers as they are found on stony riverbeds and often hide under stones and rocks. This is because they do not have a swim bladder
- * Bullhead eat freshwater invertebrates, fish eggs and tiny fish larvae
- * Bullhead need clean, well-oxygenated water to live in so our rivers need to be healthy

Did you know...

Bullhead are a member of the Cottidae family with around 300 species worldwide. However they are the only freshwater species.

They don't have scales but are slimy instead.

Bullhead

- * Bullheads are usually well camouflaged but during the breeding season the males darken to become almost black in colour
- * They "sing" to attract a female by rubbing the base of the pectoral fin against the skull bones to create a knocking noise. Females also sing but not as well as the males!
- * Male bullheads dig a shallow pit under a stone in which the female lays her eggs. The male then guards the nest until the eggs hatch, using their pectoral fins to fan water over them, keeping them well oxygenated
- * A female may lay up to 400 eggs, which take 20-30 days to hatch

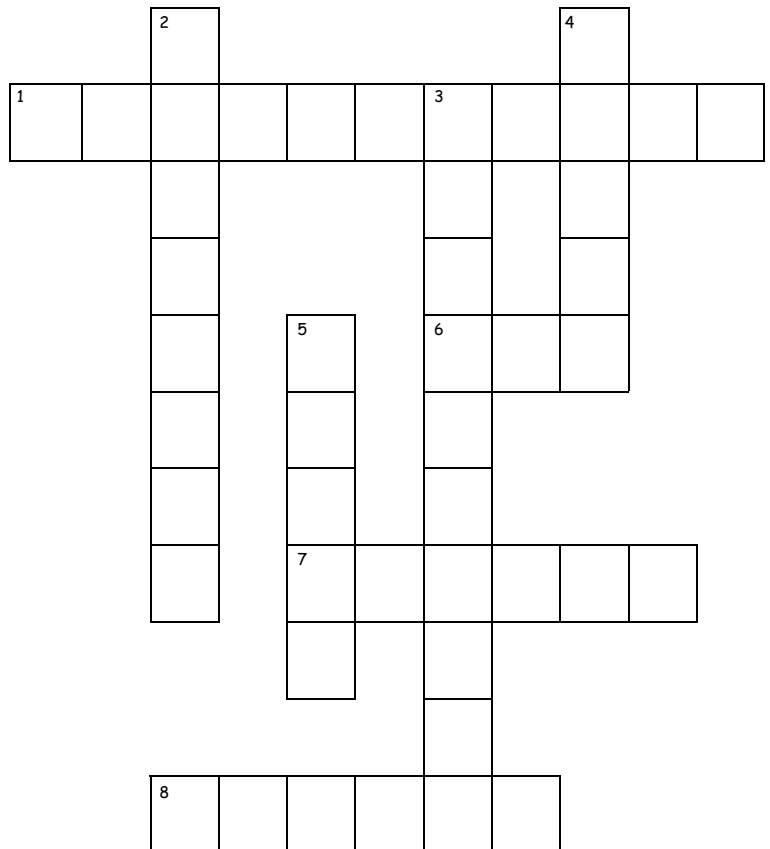
Crossword

Across

- To be active at dawn and dusk
- How many freshwater species of bullheads are there
- The worker they are named after
- What bullheads hide under

Down

- A fin that looks like a wing
- To blend in with the surroundings
- What bullheads are covered in
- The part of the hand they are named after



Why don't you...

- Write a poem or story about bullheads
- With an adult go for a walk along a river to see if you can spot any fish in the water
- You will need to carefully lift a stone to spot a bullhead

LifeR4Ever Kent project is

- Improving the rivers to make them better for freshwater pearl mussels as well as lots of other wildlife
- Planting trees, removing barriers to fish migration and tackling invasive plant species
- Breeding lots of freshwater pearl mussels to release into the rivers

Crossword answers:
 1. crepuscular 2. pectoral 3. camouflage 4. slime
 5. thumb 6. one 7. miller 8. stones

