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Catching the very smallest fish in the water can be incredibly exciting. They are very fast, very beautiful, and very skilled at avoiding you!

I've already written about how you might use a net or bottle trap to catch these critters - but here are a few of the little fish you could be lucky enough to catch.

These fish are all full of colour and character. Tropical coloured fish don't just live in tropical countries: both the male three-spined stickleback and minnow develop spectacular red throats and bellies when they are trying to attract a female to breed; but the camouflage of all of these fish is really something you will want to take a close look at.

three-spined stickleback

Appearance: Averaging between five and ten centimetres long, threespined stickleback have three sharp spines on their backs and a large sparkling blue or green eye. Their back is brown to green, blending into shiny olive green or silvery sides.

stone loach

Appearance: A slender eel-like body up to 15cms in length. The stone loach has six little whiskers called barbels hanging down beneath its mouth; these are used to feed in the night, when it is hard for the loach to see with its eyes. It has a body mottled with tiny fudge brown spots, usually over a sandy yellow or grey belly.

bullhead or Miller's Thumb

An enormous head, mouth, and pectoral fins when compared to the rest of its body. Often a very dark fish; with colours ranging from a deep brown to almost black; but it can also appear with lighter patches of brown or grey spots and bars. The bullhead is brilliant at colouring itself to hide on the bottom of a stream.

gudgeon

Appearance: A true monster among the micro-fish, averaging 10 cm in length and a whopping 2 ounces in weight! If you start fishing in the canal, the chances are the mighty gudgeon, will be the first fish you'll meet.



Appearance: A cute rounded head with a white belly meeting a darker grey-brown back. A black stripe runs along its creamy yellowy sides, and often the minnow has a line of greeny-brown dots on its sides too.



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