


**USGS Great Lakes Science Center**

## *Coregonus kiyi* — kiyi



The kiyi is one of several species of ciscoes—relatives of the lake whitefish (*Coregonus clupeaformis*), and distant relatives of trout and salmon. The whitefishes in general are the most important group of freshwater food fishes in the northern hemisphere and support the largest commercial fishery in the Great Lakes—their most southerly occurrence in the world.

Several of the cisco species in the Great Lakes are found nowhere else, and three of these are now extinct. Two others (*C. kiyi* and *C. zenithicus*) are now found only in Lake Superior. First described in 1921 by a U.S. Bureau of Fisheries scientist, Dr. Walter Koelz (the founder of the fishery investigations that ultimately became the current Great Lakes Science Center), the kiyi was found in lakes Ontario, Michigan, Huron, and Superior. The last specimens were taken from Lake Ontario in 1964, from Lake Michigan in 1974, and from Lake Huron in 1973.

The species is typically found in the deepest waters of the Great Lakes (200-540 ft.) and is distinguished from the similar bloater (*C. hoyi*) by its larger eyes and longer paired fins—and, often, darker pigmentation. It is one of the smaller species of deepwater ciscoes and matures at lengths of 5½ - 10 inches.

Potential threats to the kiyi throughout the Great Lakes have included excessive commercial harvest, possible competition and predation from introduced exotic species such as alewives and rainbow smelt, and habitat degradation. Current status of the kiyi in Lake Superior is unknown, mostly because of the great depths it occupies, but negative effects are probably minimal because no commercial fishery exists for the species and significant competitors such as alewives are also uncommon.

### R/V *Kiyi*

**HOMEPORT**  
 Bayfield, WI

**SPECIFICATIONS**  
 Year built - 1999  
 Length - 107 ft.

The R/V *Kiyi* is the Center's newest and largest vessel with the greatest geographic range and scientific capabilities in the fleet. It operates on the world's largest lake, Lake Superior. Fish stock assessment and fisheries and habitat research are conducted aboard the R/V *Kiyi*. Ship building and sea trials were completed in Fall, 1999, and it was commissioned and christened on April 28, 2000. It is now conducting fish stock assessment and research from its homeport in Bayfield, WI.

