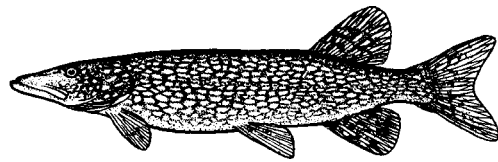


Northern pike (*Esox lucius*)

General Information

Outside of its native range, this large predator is stocked in seven waterbodies in the state. These waters include Farrington Lake, Spruce Run Reservoir, Budd Lake, Deal Lake, Cranbury Lake Pompton Lake, and the Pompton River.



Native Range

Missouri and Mississippi River drainages, the Ohio River drainage in Pennsylvania & New York and the Great Lakes basin, the southern limit was most likely Central Missouri. (Inskip, 1982)

Habitat Description

Lake: cool water species, prefer shallow (mean depths 2 - 6 m), heavily vegetated lakes with 60 - 80% surface area as littoral areas, reside in vegetated areas near the shoreline, mesotrophic to border eutrophic conditions preferred, do not tolerate brackish waters or fluctuating water levels well. Occur more frequently in lakes than rivers. (Inskip 1982; Scott and Crossman 1973; Carlander 1969)

River: large, low gradient rivers with slow currents, high percentage of pools and backwaters. (Inskip 1982)

Optimum Habitat Requirements*

Dissolved Oxygen	< 7.0 mg/l
Temperature	21° - 26° C
pH	5.0 - 9.0
Turbidity	
Current	< 5 cm/sec

*Habitat requirements and tolerances extremely variable with various life stages

Diet

Fry (10 days)	zooplankton, insect larvae
Fry (4-5 wks)	fish
Juveniles	primarily fish, insects, crayfish
Adults	fish, insects, crayfish, sm. mammals

Notes: opportunistic feeders, prefer soft ray cylindrical species, visual feeders, ambush prey, feed and are most active during the day

Growth (mm)

Age	I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII
Male	410	520	570	612	669	690	
Female	431	567	658	740	841	882	914

Notes: Great variability in growth rates from various waterbodies but also with individuals within the same population. Growth data taken from Spruce Run Reservoir and Budd Lake (1981-1989).

Reproduction

Time of Year	March (ice- out)	Age Males Mature	I - II
Temperature Range	8° - 12° C	Age Females Mature	II - III
Water Depth	0.5 m	Nest	none
Substrate	vegetation	Egg Type	adhesive
Time of Day	daytime	Parental Care	none
Critical pH	5.0	Days to Hatching	12 - 14
Vegetation	ext. important	Stable Water Level	critical

Notes: 1 female and 1 or more males continually move about in spawning groups, periodically releasing eggs & milt in various locations over vegetation, in lakes usually migrate up tributaries

to flooded marshes & wetlands, narrow spawning period, can hybridize with muskellunge, grass pickerel, chain pickerel and redbin pickerel. Reproduction, diet and habitat requirements taken from Inskip 1982; Scott and Crossman 1973.