

Northern Pike



Stanley Fischli, age 7, caught this Northern Pike at Youghiogheny River Lake, Fayette County, using a shiner.

In Pennsylvania, the Northern Pike is native to Lake Erie and the Ohio and Allegheny River watersheds.

Northern Pike only feed during the day. While anglers fish for them year-round, Northern Pike can be caught by ice anglers using large live bait. Northern Pike grow extremely fast. They are eager to bite with their rows of sharp canine-like teeth. With enough food, Northern Pike can easily reach 20 pounds and can reach 40 inches. Pennsylvania's current record is 35 pounds!

Habitat

Northern Pike are coolwater fish found in clear natural lakes and rivers. Their habitat is shallow, vegetated portions of lakes and rivers.

Lifespan

Their natural lifespan is 25 years. Most spawning Northern Pike are 3- to 5-years-old.

Spawning

Spawning season is early spring for Northern Pike. An average female will produce up to 120,000 eggs.

To learn more about the Northern Pike, check out the Commission's web page at www.fishandboat.com/pike.htm

Scales

Muskellunge has no scales on lower half of cheek and gill cover.



Northern Pike has fully scaled cheek with half of the gill cover scaled.

Tiger muskellunge has scales covering two-thirds of the cheek and gill cover area, intermediate between the Muskellunge and Northern Pike.



Jaw Pores

Muskellunge has 6 to 9 pores.
Northern Pike has 4 to 5 pores.

