

NORTHERN PIKE

Esox lucius



Joseph Tomelleri



Juvenile Northern Pike

Joe Ferreira CA Dept of Fish and Wildlife



Paul Skawinski UW-Stevens Point Extension Lakes

CHARACTERISTICS

SIZE:

Most northern pike measure 15-30 inches. The largest northern pike in Montana exceeded 37 pounds and 50 inches.

COLOR:

Pale spots on greenish background, with white belly. Fins are typically yellow-orange with black mottling.

SHAPE:

Elongated bodies and flattened, duckbill-shaped snouts. Their mouths comprise half the length of their head and are full of sharp teeth.



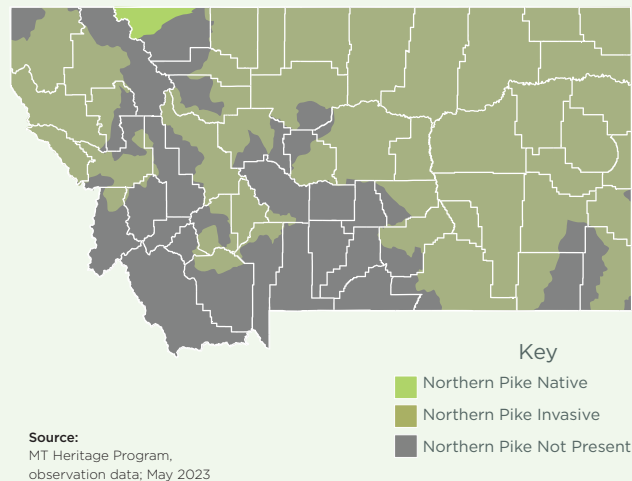
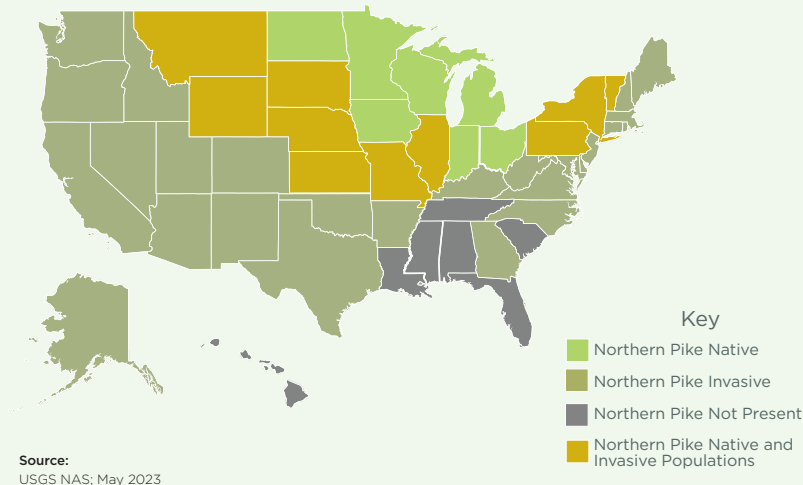
Northern Pike Underwater

US National Park Service

For more detailed information on Protecting Montana Waters from Aquatic Invasive Species visit

<https://fwp.mt.gov/conservation/aquatic-invasive-species>

DISTRIBUTION



HABITAT:

Northern pike prefer shallow, well-vegetated inshore areas of cold-water lakes, warm water sluggish streams, and river backwaters. Smaller pike tend to be found within or near patches of aquatic vegetation. Northern pike can tolerate a wide range of environmental factors, including warm and cold temperatures, brackish waters (low-salinity), and low oxygen levels.

NATIVE TO:

Atlantic, Arctic, Pacific, Great Lakes, and Mississippi River basins from Labrador to Alaska and south to Pennsylvania, Missouri, and Nebraska.

PREVENTION AND SPREAD:

This species has been intentionally stocked as a sport fish in many areas. In some cases, introductions were illegal. Illegal introduction sites include: Coeur d'Alene Lake, Idaho, Clearwater Basin Lakes in Montana, Keyhole Reservoir, Wyoming; and Beaver Creek Reservoir, Bitterroot, Clark Fork and Flathead Rivers in Montana, and lakes in Alaska.

Sources:
USGS Nonindigenous Aquatic Species, Montana Field Guide

IMPACTS:

Northern pike are aggressive predators at the top of the food chain. Their diet consists mainly of fish, but they will also eat frogs, snakes, small mammals, and birds if given the opportunity. The piscivorous Northern Pike has been shown to significantly reduce prey density and has the potential to cause large-scale changes in fish communities, even resulting in species elimination.

NATIVE LOOKALIKES:

No native fish resemble the northern pike.

IN MONTANA:

Northern pike are native to the Saskatchewan River drainage on the east side of Glacier National Park. They are now present across the state as an invasive species.



Robert Jacobs CT DEEP Fisheries Division

If you see or suspect a new infestation of an invasive plant or animal, please save a specimen, and record the location.

Report observations to Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks at
<https://fwp.mt.gov/conservation/aquatic-invasive-species/report-an-ais>
Or call the MT FWP front desk at 406-444-2440