

# INVASIVE SPECIES ALERT!

## NORTHERN PIKE

(*Esox lucius*)

### HAVE YOU SEEN THIS ANIMAL?

#### DESCRIPTION

Northern pike...

- Have an elongated snake-like body, depressed snout (duck-like) and bright yellow eyes
- Have a large mouth with many sharp teeth, and an extended lower jaw
- Have a singular dorsal (back) fin that is set far back near the forked tail fin
- Are bluish to greenish-gray in colour with horizontal rows of light irregular spots on back and sides; bottom side is white-yellow in colour



Image credit: Georg Mittenecker, Wikimedia commons (CC-BY-SA-3)

**REPORT INVASIVE SPECIES**

Download the App!



[www.gov.bc.ca/invasive-species](http://www.gov.bc.ca/invasive-species)

#### PRIMARY THREAT:

*Northern pike can reduce food availability and affect native fish communities through predation and competition.*

#### SPREAD

Northern pike are being released into non-native waterways by sports fisherman and have spread into southern B.C. from trans-boundary rivers in the Columbia region. They are aggressive, solitary hunters, preying heavily on other fish species, small organisms (zooplankton, insects, and insect larvae), frogs, small birds, and even small mammals (mice and muskrats). This wide-ranging diet allows northern pike to inhabit a variety of regions. Populations of this species can grow rapidly, as females lay thousands of eggs per spawning period.



Image credit: Elendal, Wikimedia commons (CC0)

Northern pike prefer shallow weedy lakes and slow flowing rivers with thick vegetation. This type of habitat helps northern pike to ambush their prey.

For more information: <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/environment/plants-animals-ecosystems/invasive-species>



# NORTHERN PIKE (*Esox lucius*)

## DISTRIBUTION & STATUS

Northern pike are native to northeastern B.C., but have also been introduced into southern B.C., specifically in the lower Columbia and Pend d'Oreille River systems.

## LOOK-ALIKES:

Northern pike can be mistaken for the Burbot (*Lota lota*), which is native to eastern British Columbia.

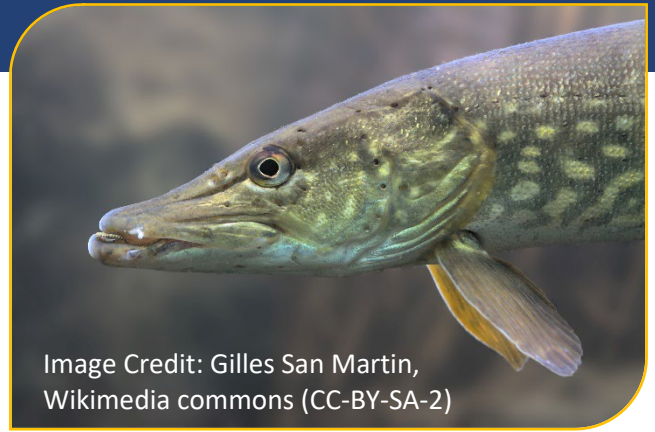


Image Credit: Gilles San Martin, Wikimedia commons (CC-BY-SA-2)

## Northern Pike (NP) vs. Burbot (B) Distinguishing features:

- NP has 1 dorsal fin (covering the majority of the backside)  
B has 2 dorsal fins (1 small at front near head and 1 large that covers the majority of the backside).
- The snout is long and narrow for NP, short and wide for B.
- NP doesn't have barbels (fleshy whisker-like projection)  
B has a single long barbel at the chin.
- The body color is bluish to greenish gray with light irregular spots for NP, light brown with dark blotches on body for B.

## NORTHERN PIKE VS. NORTHERN PIKEMINNOW

Northern Pike (NP) and Northern Pikeminnow (*Ptychocheilus oregonensis*; NPM) are both present in B.C. NP are native to northeastern B.C., and invasive to the rest of B.C., while NPM are native throughout B.C. They are commonly misidentified, likely due to similarities in common name.



Northern Pikeminnow

Image Credit: Sidalcea, iNaturalist (CC-BY-NC)



Northern Pike

Image Credit: Arnstein Rønning, Wikimedia commons (CC-BY-SA-4)



Burbot

Image Credit: Rob Foster, iNaturalist (CC-BY)

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## WHAT CAN YOU DO?

- Do not transfer and/or release live northern pike in B.C.
- Raise awareness to avoid further spread in B.C. freshwaters
- Report northern pike, or any other invasive species via the **Report Invasives mobile app**, email, or **webform** available on:  
[www.gov.bc.ca/invasive-species](http://www.gov.bc.ca/invasive-species)

## DID YOU KNOW?

Northern pike have the ability to move on land and they can withstand freezing temperatures or no water for substantial periods of time.

For more information: <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/environment/plants-animals-ecosystems/invasive-species>

