

Northern Pike

Esox lucius

Fish · Here all year · spawns Mar-May



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A long, cylindrical predator with a flattened, duck-like snout full of backward-pointing teeth, and the dorsal and anal fins set far back near the tail for explosive acceleration. The olive-green flanks are broken by pale bars that break up its outline among weed. Pike live in the lochs, slow reaches and weedy waters of the region, and females grow far larger than males.

BEHAVIOUR

The pike is an ambush hunter: it holds motionless in cover, then accelerates in a single burst to seize prey sideways in its jaws before turning it to swallow head-first. It takes fish, amphibians, ducklings and small mammals. Spawning is early, in flooded margins and weed in spring, and pike are among the first fish to breed each year. Big females are old fish and important to the population.

WHEN TO SEE IT

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QUICK FACTS

FAMILY	Pikes (Esocidae)
SIZE	Commonly 50–90 cm · large females can exceed 1 m
UK STATUS	Native; widespread in still and slow waters

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