

Esox lucius Linnaeus, 1758

Pike or Northern Pike

Family: Esocidae

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(Photo Crisod, Fotolia)

Pikes typically have a **flat and pointed head**, a long and compressed body, wide mouth with prominent jaw and strong, pointed teeth all along the upper and lower jaw, palate and tongue.

It's **livery varies according to its environment**, season and age; it is usually olive green, brown or grey, darker along the back, light on the sides and whitish on the underbelly.

On the back and sides it shows silvery white or gold spots, stripes or bars.

This is a **large fish**, with a maximum length in males of around 90 cm, while females reach 150 cm and weight up to 27 kg.

It has a long lifespan, living up to 20-30 years in the wild, although considerably older specimens have also been observed.

Its preferred habitat is still or moderate-flowing water in the plains, with a sandy or muddy floor and abundant plantlife.

Pikes are **solitary, sedentary and territorial**, travelling only during the mating season to find suitable breeding places. It is a solitary and very active predator, hiding, immobile and laying wait for its prey before darting forwards to attack.

Adult pikes mainly feed on fish, crustaceans and other invertebrates, as well as amphibians, water snakes, small mammals and aquatic birds.

It has firm, white flesh that is good to eat, although with a relatively high number of bones.

Bio-Montagne - Réseau d'éducation sur la biodiversité dans les zones alpines - Programma di cooperazione transfrontaliera Italia-Svizzera 2007-2013