



NORTHERN PIKE

Esox lucius



SNOEK



LÚCIO



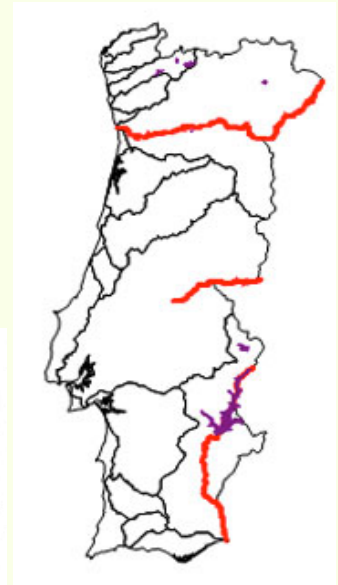
LUCCIO



GRAND BROCHET

Geographical Distribution

The *Northern Pike* is found in fresh water throughout the Northern Hemisphere, including Russia, Europe and North America. The pike was introduced in Spain at the beginning of the second half of the twentieth century, to promote sport fishing, and later it reached Portugal via international rivers. At the moment it is found in the main courses of the Douro, Tejo, Guadiana and still in the terminal part of some of its tributaries of greater dimension.



Habitat

Pikes are found in sluggish streams and shallow, weedy places in lakes, as well as in cold, clear, rocky waters. They are typical ambush predators: they lie in wait for prey, holding perfectly still for long periods, and then exhibit remarkable acceleration as they strike. They inhabit any water body that contain fish, but suitable places for spawning are essential for their numbers. Because of their cannibalistic nature, young pike need places where they can take shelter between plants so they are not eaten. In both cases, rich submerged vegetation is needed.

Description

Northern pikes are most often olive green, shading from yellow to white along the belly. The flank is marked with short, light bar-like spots and a few to many dark spots on the fins. Sometimes the fins are reddish. Very elongated body, very large head and mouth provided with several rows of pointed and sharp teeth.

Feeding behavior

It is a predatory species. It feeds mainly on fish, only consuming the prey in motion, hunting them normally by ambush. Invertebrates constitute an important part of juvenile feeding. It's kind of very fast growing.

Fishing

Although it is generally known as a "sporting" quarry, some anglers release pike they have caught because the flesh is considered bony. The white and mild-tasting flesh of pikes nonetheless has a long history in cuisine since Romans time. Fishing for pike is said to be very exciting with their aggressive hits and aerial acrobatics.