

THIS INTRODUCED SPECIES
IS NOW WIDESPREAD
THROUGHOUT LAKE GEORGE

CHAIN PICKEREL

Chain pickerel (*Esox niger*) are a popular sport fish in the summer as well as in the winter when a large number are caught through the ice. The average fish is under 24 inches and weighs 1 to 2 pounds, although these fish can get much larger. Adult chain pickerel are dark green to yellowish-brown with a white belly. Chain pickerel have distinct chain-like patterns of narrow black lines on their sides. It is distinguished from both the muskellunge and the northern pike by its fully scaled cheeks and gill covers. The chain pickerel prefers weedy areas, although it can be found in deeper parts of lakes where there is little or no vegetation. It can withstand acidic waters with a pH of 4, water temperatures of 95°F or greater, and water with high salt levels.

The chain pickerel spawns in the spring when water temperatures reach 47 to 50°F. No nests are built and no parental care of the



Chain pickerel are a popular sport fish in Lake George and can reach an average length of 24 inches. They are opportunistic hunters and will eat almost anything they can catch.

egg or young occurs during and after the spawning period. Females are accompanied by one or two males that swim together and periodically roll so that their vents are together. Spawning will continue for as long as a couple of days. The eggs are sticky and will adhere to the vegetation among other surfaces. Hatching will take

THE FUND *for* LAKE GEORGE



po box 352, lake george, ny 12845 · (518) 668-9700
info@fundforlakegeorge.org
fundforlakegeorge.org



LAKE • GEORGE
WATERKEEPER[®]

po box 591, lake george, ny 12845 · (518) 668-5913
info@lakegeorgewaterkeeper.org
lakegeorgewaterkeeper.org

Chain Pickerel

LAKE GEORGE FACT SHEET

place in less than two weeks and young attach themselves to the vegetation by means of an adhesive gland at the tip of the snout. The young will begin to feed after about a week and reach 4 to 5 inches by the end of the first summer.

Chain pickerel are predaceous, opportunistic feeders and will feed on almost any small animal that it can fit in its mouth. The chain pickerel is not native to Lake George, but has reportedly been found in the watershed since the 1960s where it was caught on gill nets from Trout Lake. In the early 1970s it was found in the outlet of Lake George by a resident in Ticonderoga. It is speculated that the chain pickerel was either introduced into Trout Lake and entered Lake George via Huddle Brook or was the result of another introduction in the area. This fish is now a major predator of the shallow littoral zone in Lake George and competes for food and habitat with the Lake Trout, among other fish. Pickerel of any size can be caught in Lake George from the first Saturday in May to March 15th with a limit of five per day. For additional information on fishing regulations in New York State please visit www.dec.ny.gov.



Chain Pickerel- *Esox niger*
averages 15 - 20 inches

Chain pickerel prefer shallow water where it preys upon a variety of smaller fish. Chain pickerel are not native to Lake George, but today thrive in the lake and are a widely desired sport fish for anglers.

THE FUND FOR LAKE GEORGE



LAKE • GEORGE
WATERKEEPER®

