

THIS VORACIOUS INVASIVE FISH HAS BEEN FOUND IN OTHER WATERBODIES IN NEW YORK

NORTHERN SNAKEHEAD



Northern snakehead fish (*Channa argus*), also known as "Fishzilla" or "Frankenfish," is an invasive freshwater fish species now identified in New York State. While this voracious top-level predator has not been found within Lake George or surrounding bodies of water, the potential for it to inhabit any lake or stream is high. It is illegal to possess, sell, or transport live fish or viable eggs of snakehead fish in New York State. The snakehead is capable of disrupting the ecological balance of any body of water by out competing native species as well as

This voracious fish is highly adaptable and even capable of overland migration. They can flourish in a variety of lakes, ponds, rivers and streams.

transferring pathogens to native fish. Snakeheads have been found in two lakes in southern New York.

Snakeheads look very similar to bowfin fish. They are long and cylindrical with enlarged scales on their head, hence the name snakehead. They have a large mouth with a protruding lower jaw that contains canine-like teeth. The largest recorded snakehead was four feet in length. Snakeheads feed primarily on other fish, but will also eat frogs, crayfish, birds, mammals, turtles and macroinvertebrates. They will spawn multiple times a year with the females releasing tens of thousands of eggs each time. Eggs will hatch in 1 to 2 days.

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

Northern Snakehead

LAKE GEORGE FACT SHEET

The adults will protect the young until they are able to feed on their own.

Northern snakehead fish are capable of overland migration, air breathing, and can live for days out of water. They are very aggressive in their efforts to protect their young and will out-compete other native fish for food and quickly dominate a lake. They can have a huge impact on local fish populations through displacement and predation.

Snakehead fish are native to Asia and Africa. The primary means of introduction are the aquarium trade and the food market. Aquarium owners buy these fish when they are small, underestimate the size it can grow to and the amount of food that they will eat, then release them into a local body of water to get rid of them. It is also thought that humans have intentionally released snakeheads into bodies of water to propagate an inexpensive food resource.

Reproductive populations have been documented in Maryland, Virginia, Pennsylvania, and Massachusetts. Snakeheads have been identified in Lake Michigan and in 2005 were found in two locations in New York State. The first was documented in ponds in Queens, the other in



Northern snakeheads have been found in lakes in Maryland, Virginia, Pennsylvania, and Massachusetts. These fish are now found in Lake Michigan.

Ridgebury Lake in the town of Wawayanda, Orange County. The Ridgebury Lake population has the potential to infest the entire Hudson River drainage. It is unknown if they are reproducing there.

Eradication methods consist of draining a body of water and poisoning it, which because these fish can migrate on land will not necessarily be effective. Prevention of infestation to any body of water is very important and the most effective means to protect Lake George. The recommended prevention methods are:

- Never release aquarium fish into any body of water;
- Stock only native fish for food propagation; and,
- If you think you have caught a snakehead fish contact the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation at: (518) 897-1333.

We need your help to protect Lake George from invasive species.

January 2010

THE FUND *for* LAKE GEORGE



LAKE · GEORGE
WATERKEEPER

