

# Pike

**Regno:** fauna

Fish

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## Pike - *Esox lucius*

The Pike is the most voracious predator of Italy's inland waters, occupying the top position of lake, river and marshland food chains.

It has an elongated, slim body, with a large tail fin and the dorsal and anal fins set well back, characteristics which help it seize its prey in a flash. As it is so large (up to 130 cm in length and weighing as much as 27 kg in Europe) and has a very wide mouth with strong, sharp teeth pointing backwards, it can catch rodents and young water birds as well as fish, amphibians and reptiles.

The fish it feeds on are mainly various species of Cyprinids (carp, rudd, goldfish, etc.), so it plays an important role in controlling abundant populations.

The Pike did not really have any natural competitors until the arrival of the Large-mouthed Black Bass (*Micropterus salmoides*), an allochthonous species imported for angling purposes and which shares the same eco-ethological characteristics.

The American guest resists changes in the environment better than the Catfish, it practises an evolved parental care system and the fry have a higher growth rate, all factors that have contributed to the decline of the Pike population - together with poaching which is still widespread even today.

The number of Pike is falling all over Europe, also on account of the destruction of the riverine reed thickets which are the Pike's favourite hunting and breeding grounds.

Reed and cane thickets are common in Italy's wetlands, but the Pike can find them inhospitable because of the abnormal proliferation of filamentous alga due to eutrophication.

**Source URL:** <http://www.zoneumidetoscane.it/en/pike>

### Links:

[1] <http://www.zoneumidetoscane.it/sites/default/files/luccio.jpg>