

Invasive Sportfish

Eg. Chain Pickerel, Muskellunge, Small and Largemouth Bass, and Black Crappie

About

Invasive sportfish are non-native fish species that are sought after by recreational anglers, such as Chain Pickerel, Muskellunge (Muskie), Small and Large Mouth Bass, and Black Crappie. Due to their predatory nature, when introduced to new areas by humans, these non-native species can quickly establish in local lakes and rivers and become invasive, impacting native fish and other aquatic species.






Problem

While each species will have specific impacts on aquatic ecosystems, in general invasive gamefish outcompete native fish species for food & habitat and increase predation of native fish and other aquatic species such as insects and small animals.



While some of these species may have been introduced to local waterbodies a long time ago, we are concerned with them spreading further into uninvaded waterways and causing additional impacts to native species. By never moving or releasing sportfish or live bait into new waterbodies, we can prevent further spread of these invasive species.

Species of concern

<p>Chain Pickerel (<i>Esox niger</i>)</p>		<p>Distinct chain-like pattern on a torpedo shaped body; this energetic sport fish has many rows of sharp, angled teeth.</p>
<p>Muskellunge (<i>Esox masquinongy</i>)</p>	 <p>In Fisherman</p>	<p>AKA. Muskie, "The fish of 10,000 casts"; this large aggressive sport fish can swallow prey up to half their length!</p>
<p>Smallmouth Bass (<i>Micropterus dolomieu</i>)</p>	 <p>Wikipedia</p>	<p>Part of the Sunfish family, this popular sport fish is an ambush predator and has a mouth that stops before the eye.</p>

<p>Largemouth Bass (<i>Micropterus salmoides</i>)</p>	 <p>Michael Carrerra</p>	<p>An aggressive carnivore, this large sport fish eats a variety of aquatic species and even birds and turtles, with a mouth extending past the eye.</p>
<p>Black Crappie (<i>Pomoxis nigromaculatus</i>)</p>	 <p>Simonson Photo</p>	<p>Native to Ontario, this widely transplanted fish can be identified by the 7-8 spines on its dorsal fin and a mouth that extends below the eye.</p>

Help Stop The Spread!

Invasive gamefish can be spread both intentionally (ie. when introduced to new waterbodies for their fishing potential) or unintentionally by 'escaping' current waterbodies or holding tanks. When angling, help stop the further spread of these and other invasive species by taking the following steps:

- Never introduce non-native fish species into local waterbodies
- Always release fish into the same waterbody they were caught in, and as close as possible to where you caught them
- Follow guidelines around the use and disposal of live bait in different areas
- **Don't Let it Loose!** Never transfer fish or dump live bait.



Have you seen an aquatic invasive species in New Brunswick?

Take photos of whole species, including relevant features and note:

- the exact location (GPS coordinates)
- the observation date
- identifying features
- Make a report on iNaturalist Canada online (inaturalist.ca) or using the mobile app. You can also send invasive species reports to info@nbinvasives.ca with photos and observation information.



It is illegal to introduce non-native aquatic species without approval.

Resources:

- New Brunswick Invasive Species Council: <http://nbinvasives.ca>
- GNB Illegal stocking info card: <https://www2.gnb.ca/content/dam/gnb/Departments/nr-rn/pdf/en/Fish/IllegalStocking-IntroducedFishSpecies.pdf>
- NB Fishing Guide 2022-23 (see pg 11,13): <https://www2.gnb.ca/content/dam/gnb/Departments/nr-rn/pdf/en/Fish/Fish.pdf>