

Tribe Asks Anglers to Catch Pike for Cash

Project designed to gather information for management

The Coeur d'Alene Tribe is sponsoring a research reward program that will pay anglers to catch northern pike in the southern end of Coeur d'Alene Lake beginning fall of 2015. The program is part of an ongoing, comprehensive effort by the Tribe to conserve and recover native cutthroat trout in the Coeur d'Alene Basin, with the additional goal of benefitting other game fish that are affected by a burgeoning pike population in the shallow, southern lake.

Historically, migratory cutthroat were prevalent across many of the low elevation watersheds in the Coeur d'Alene Basin. A life history that entailed moving between the many streams and rivers in the area and the lake resulted in an exceptionally productive fishery that boasted adult fish in excess of three pounds. Though the present distribution of migratory trout is not well described, populations still exist in a number of watersheds, albeit at low levels that currently cannot sustain a harvest. To assist with recovery, the Tribe has been implementing stream restoration measures over the last 20 years to improve the quality of spawning and rearing habitats for these trout. Recovery efforts have also entailed monitoring the survival rates of juveniles that move to the lake. The monitoring indicates that less than 2% of juveniles are returning to spawn as adults. This prompted a lake-wide research study to examine whether predation by northern pike, a non-native predator introduced in the mid-70's, could be contributing to the low survival rates.

Local research indicated that cutthroat can make up to 30% of the pike diet in some locations (kokanee can make up to 88%). Furthermore, pike were found to have significant localized impacts on trout populations. For example, in Windy Bay - located directly across the lake from the Coeur d'Alene River - the pike population was estimated to annually remove more than 50% of adult cutthroat trout that were destined to spawn in the Lake Creek watershed. Because of the substantial impact of pike on this spawning population, the Tribe in collaboration with the State of Idaho initiated a 3-year pilot program to annually remove pike from Windy Bay. The program is being closely monitored to evaluate the responses to the work.

These collective efforts are intended to inform the management of pike in the southern end of Coeur d'Alene Lake with the objectives of minimizing the impact of pike on migratory trout that enter the lake via the St. Joe River and from smaller tributaries, and also to benefit the other fish species that commonly make up the diet of pike, which include yellow perch, black crappie, bluegill and kokanee. For example, one might expect to find more of these other game fish with fewer pike present.

To supplement the information gained from other efforts, the Tribe desires more research data on the abundance, distribution, movement, and diet of pike that inhabit the southern end of the lake to develop a focused management approach. To this end, the research reward program could be a cost-effective strategy that collects the desired data from fish harvested by anglers. Specifically, the program aims to gather data on time periods or locations where there is a high incidence of pike predation on cutthroat trout.

Because the reward program is intended to satisfy specific research needs, only pike harvested from a target area encompassing the southern end of the lake are valid for reward monies. **The reward program will be in effect from October through May**, a period when interaction between pike and cutthroat is most likely. An important aspect of the program is the use of marked fish that can more accurately describe seasonal movement and diet across the study area as these fish are harvested and turned in by anglers. The tags in these fish are not visible, so anglers will not be able to recognize one of these special reward fish upon capture. Therefore, participating anglers should turn in all pike. Anglers are encouraged to turn in whole pike to the check station, which is located at the Heyburn State Park Headquarters at 57 Chatcolet Rd, so that Tribal staff will be able to examine stomach contents of harvested fish. After the fish are processed, they will be donated to Birds of Prey Northwest, a raptor rehabilitation facility in St. Maries, Idaho.

Information on the program is posted at the check station, as well as at the three boat launches that are located in Heyburn State Park. The program is planned to continue for several years, but the duration will ultimately be determined by research outcomes and the level of interest and participation from anglers.

Enlisting the Citizen Scientist

The public can play a significant role in gathering critical information that contributes to the effective management of northern pike in Coeur d'Alene Lake.

Program Highlights

The goal is to maintain a balance between predator and prey populations that improves survival for native trout and benefits other game fish in the southern end of Coeur d'Alene Lake.

- In-lake survival of juvenile cutthroat is less than 2%.
- Cutthroat can make up to 30% of pike diet, and pike were found to remove more than 50% of adult cutthroat prior to spawning in some locations.

More information on abundance, movement and diet is needed to effectively manage pike in the southern end of Coeur d'Alene Lake.

Anglers can make all the difference!

For further information contact the Coeur d'Alene Tribe Fisheries Program: (208) 686-5302.



SOME IMPORTANT THINGS TO KNOW:

- The reward program will be in effect from **OCTOBER 1 THROUGH MAY 31.**
- **Only northern pike harvested from the target area in the southern end of the lake** (see map) and deposited at the **check station at the Heyburn State Park headquarters** are valid for reward monies.
- The **first 1000 pike returned to the check station will be paid a reward value of \$5/fish.**
- In addition, uniquely numbered **tags that are worth \$50-\$500 have been implanted into the heads of northern pike** in the southern end of the lake. Tags in these fish are not visible, so anglers will not be able to recognize one of these special reward fish upon capture. Fish will need to be scanned by Tribal staff to determine if they have one of these unique tags.
 - **Note to anglers:** northern pike have not been found to move extensively among bays in Coeur d'Alene Lake, so fish tagged in the southern end will likely remain there. Thus, **fish harvested outside the target area will most likely not have one of these special embedded reward tags.**
 - Furthermore, though the tag is implanted into the head of the pike, the Tribe would **prefer the whole fish turned in to the check station,** and not just its head, to examine stomach contents and gather more information on seasonal diets.
- Reward monies will be mailed to anglers who have a valid fishing license and who **completely fill out the angler report cards.** Report cards are required to have name and mailing address, license number, the date when pike were harvested, the location where fish were caught (see map zones on back of report card), and need to be signed.
 - **Accurately indicate the zone(s) where fish were harvested.** If needed, use multiple bags and report cards to clearly indicate the locations of harvest when fishing across a larger area.

LIM LEMTSH (THANK YOU) FOR PARTICIPATING!

PIKE RESEARCH REWARD PROGRAM - ANGLER REPORT CARD
Only Northern Pike harvested within the designated target area are valid

How it Works:

- Completely fill out information below and sign – Incomplete reports will not be paid.
- Indicate general zone where fish were caught on map (see reverse side of card) and record any additional comments on capture location.
- Place report card and pike in bag, and deposit in small hatch door on freezer. Use small bags if only depositing heads, and large bags if depositing whole fish. Bags, waterproof report cards, and pencils are available at the **check station located at Heyburn State Park Headquarters.**
- Check made payable to angler will be mailed to the address filled in below.

Falsification of records for the purpose of obtaining funds fraudulently will be prosecuted. Anglers found guilty of falsifying records will not be eligible for further participation in the reward program.

Name/Mailing Address: *William B. Fisher*
57 Chatcolet Road
Plummer, ID 83851

Date: *October, 3, 2015*
CDA License#: *CT 4158*

Signature: *Will B. Fisher*

Zone/Location of Capture: *Fish caught in Zone 1 near Plummer Point, from the bank*