

Non-Native Fish Management

Rivers/Reservoirs

Northern pike were detected in Box Canyon Reservoir, Pend Oreille River in a 2004 standardized warmwater fish survey by KNRD, WDFW, and EWU. The Joint Stock Assessment Project (JSAP) has documented exponential growth of the population from 400 adults to over 5500 adults between 2006-2010, and expansion in range within the reservoir. Northern pike have been documented in Boundary Reservoir, the free flowing Columbia River in Canada, Lake Roosevelt, and three lakes in Spokane County. JSAP and WDFW have implemented the Spring Pike Index Netting (SPIN) survey since 2010 to monitor the abundance and population structure, as well as assessed pike diet and bioenergetics, age and growth, movement and habitat use, reproductive potential, and angler exploitation.

Standardized warmwater fish surveys conducted by KNRD and WDFW in 2004, 2009, and 2011 have documented drastic declines in the abundance of nearly every resident fish species in the reservoir since the establishment of northern pike. Significant investment (>\$500 million) in native fish recovery has been committed over the next 50 years in the Pend Oreille watershed by Pend Oreille Public Utility District, Seattle City Light, Avista Corporation, US Army Corps of Engineers, and Bonneville Power Administration. Northern pike pose unacceptable risks to those efforts. If left alone, downstream migration to Columbia River reservoirs is imminent and could be disastrous to tribal, commercial, and recreational salmon and steelhead fisheries and further complicate the recovery of those ESA-listed species. Illegal introductions into neighboring waters within WA have also been documented and threaten popular, economically important recreational fisheries and fish communities.

KNRD, in cooperation with WDFW began mechanically suppressing northern pike with gill nets in March, 2012 as part of a multi-pronged approach to reduce their abundance by 87%. Additionally, WDFW removed northern pike from the list of gamefish and approved two-pole endorsement to encourage harvest. Increased harvest is being promoted through a public education and outreach campaign, and the harvest-oriented derby "PikePalooza 2012". WDFW has also produced a webpage dedicated to sharing information on the deleterious effects of northern pike, survey summaries, and management direction on the Agency's website (http://wdfw.wa.gov/ais/esox_lucius/). Signage at boat launches along the Pend Oreille River and neighboring waters has been placed to discourage further illegal introductions of northern pike.