



78. PIKE-PERCH / ZANDER (*Luciooperca lucioperca*)

IDENTIFICATION: The body of the pike-perch is elongated and somewhat pike-like in appearance. Both jaws are equally long; the mouth is deeply cut and contains many small teeth. Their gill covers are sharply pointed. The back is basically greenish-gray, fading to a dull white toward the belly. The flanks of young pike-perch have 8 to 10 vertical brown bars that may disappear with age. The grayish dorsal and tail fins are spotted; other fins are yellowish-gray.

HABITAT: Pike-perch are river and lake fish. They prefer warm and shallow waters with a gravelly or sandy bottom. Unlike pike that stalk their prey, pike-perch chase their victims. Pike-perch also forage in murky waters because they can adjust their eyesight to cloudy water conditions.

FOOD: Pike-perch diet and food value is similar to those of the perch.

SPAWNING: Pike-perch spawn from March to May. A single male and female perform the breeding act. The female releases 75,000 to 100,000 sticky eggs per pound of body weight. The eggs adhere to submerged roots or branches and the male safeguards the nest.