



TECH BULLETIN

COLUMBIA RIVER SYSTEM

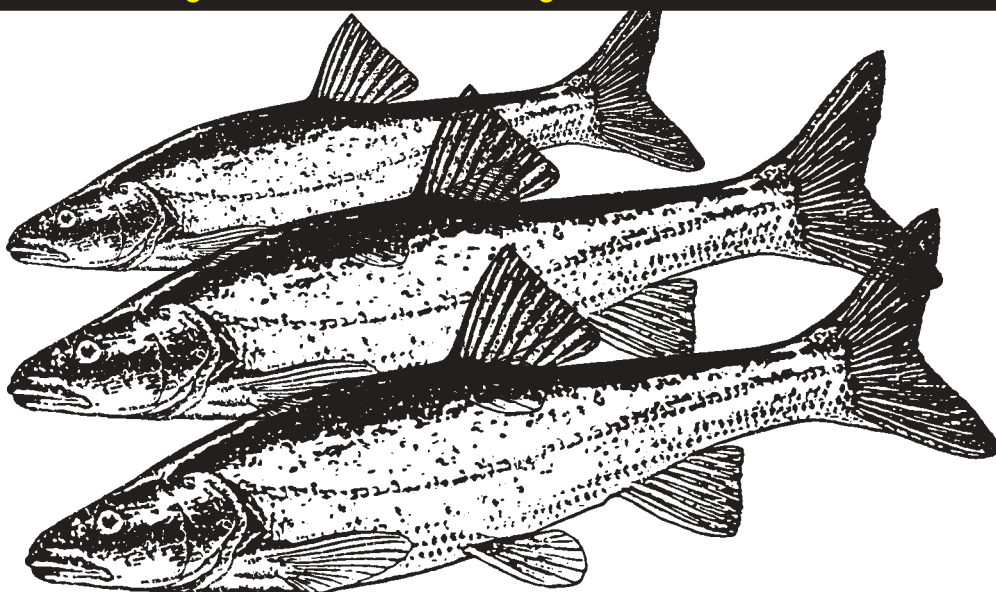
NORTHERN PIKEMINNOW

Compiled from the Diaries and Logs of the Luhr Jensen Fishing Research Team.

**WANTED!
DEAD
OR ALIVE!**

**Northern
Pikeminnow**

"A Ruthless Salmon &
Steelhead Killer!"



A DEADLY PREDATOR

Studies have found that an adult pikeminnow (formerly called squawfish) can devour as many as 15 salmon or steelhead smolts a day! The series of hydroelectric dams has turned the Columbia River system into a prime pikeminnow habitat, so anglers participating in the catching of these aggressive, hungry killers are actually helping bring back a more natural balance between this predator and the smolts.

A GIANT MINNOW

Biologically, the pikeminnow is a giant member of the ordinarily small, minnow family. It has a long snout and a large mouth, is dusky green on top and silvery bronze below. It is shaped like a walleye, except that walleyes have spiny dorsal fins, the lower half of their tail fins are white-tipped and they have

teeth whereas pikeminnows don't.

The Northern pikeminnow is distinctly different from the threatened Colorado variety and is *definitely not an endangered species!*

Again this year, the Bonneville Power Administration is financing a program not intended to eliminate pikeminnows but rather to create a better balance between the numbers of salmon and the number of pikeminnows. There is a reward of \$4 to \$6 offered for each one over 9 inches in length that is turned in to a check-in site.

The Bonneville Power Administration's bounty program from The Dalles Dam to the mouth of the Columbia starts on May 5, 2003. The fishery from The Dalles Dam upstream will start May 19. Both fisheries will

end on October 5, 2003.

The Sport reward payment schedule is as follows:

0- 100 fish \$4 per fish

101-400 fish \$5 per fish

401 and above \$6 per fish.

Minimum size requirement is 9 inches. Tagged fish rewards are \$100 per tagged fish.

Fish turned in are used to provide biological data to better manage the fishery. Those caught are not wasted but are processed into liquid organic fertilizer for agriculture and fish meal for poultry and dairy feed.

Reward money is collected by sending vouchers issued to the address printed on them. Anglers are rewarded based on how many fish they catch. Fish must be caught within the designated

REAL KILLER PIKEMINNOW LURES!



zones of the Columbia River system. Participants must register each day they fish at any one of several stations along the river.

HOW TO CATCH THEM

Although a pikeminnow will grab just about anything "edible" near it, they feed primarily on small fish, preying heavily on downstream-headed salmon and steelhead smolts, as well as perch, shad and a variety of other fish.

They have ravenous appetites. In fact, it is not unusual to catch and clean a 14- to 22-inch pikeminnow and find four or five other fish in its stomach, including some as long as six inches!

WHAT WORKS?

Anglers have found bass-type crankbaits such as Luhr Jensen's **Baby Hot Lips®** and **Speed Traps™** to be red hot performers. Try these baits in **#0806 Rainbow Trout** and **#0949 Silver/Blue Top** finishes.

- **Kwikfish®** size K10, K11 & K12 in **#0806 Rainbow Trout** and **#0936 Silver/Blue Scale** finishes are proven pikeminnow killers.

- **Krocodile®** spoons in smolt-resembling finishes such as **#0153 Chrome/Blue Prism-Lite®** and **#0306 Chrome/Neon Blue Stripe** are very effective.

- **Bang-Tail®** spinners are available in many effective finishes. This spinner is a high-action, high-visibility meal for the patrolling northern pikeminnow.

WHERE ARE THEY?

Northern pikeminnows will most likely be caught in the top 15 feet of water, as that's the migrating zone for the downstream salmon & steelhead

smolts. The most productive strike zone will be from six feet down to 15 feet. Select lures that will remain at those depth ranges for the longest times during your retrieve.

The best locations for pikeminnow all have something in common. They are sheltered positions where the fish can dart out into a group of unsuspecting smolts and nab one. Heavy currents force the smolts into concentrated migration paths and this is where pikeminnows wait in sheltered feeding stations. Look for the majority to be in protected waters, such as in back eddies along shorelines, on the downriver side of points of land, in bays and other spots where they don't have to fight the river's current. Water along rip-rapped shore line is also a good bet. Pikeminnows are not fast, so in addition to fishing slower water, remember to work your spoons, crankbaits or other lures SLOWLY! A **Speed Trap™** or **Kwikfish®** slowly trolled just at the edge of shoreline dropoffs in 3 to 8 feet of water can be dynamite. Another productive method is to let your boat drift with the current and cast to shore and retrieve either spoons or small crankbaits.

NORTHERN PIKEMINNOW HOT SPOTS

The following areas usually produce more than their share of pikeminnows:

1. The base of Bonneville Dam to Rooster Rock, particularly off creek mouths and drop-offs.
2. Below The Dalles Dam, near the old ferry docks on the Washington side.
3. In back eddies just downstream

from the mouths of the Washougal, Big and Little White Salmon, Klickitat and Yakima rivers on the Washington side and Eagle Creek, the Hood, Deschutes and John Day rivers on the Oregon side.

4. Below John Day Dam next to the fast water and around the islands and outcroppings.

5. Off the mouth of the Umatilla River.

6. On the downstream side of all islands.

KEEP YOUR HOOKS SHARP!

One of the easiest things you can do to improve your fishing success is to maintain sharp hooks on your lures at all times. A fine-toothed file such as Luhr Jensen's **Sharp Hook File™** is the best hook sharpening tool available. Hold the file parallel to the hook point and, with gently, one-way strokes, remove a small amount of metal on at least two sides to obtain a stick-sharp point with a knife-like cutting edge. *Sharp hooks catch and hold onto fish!*

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Northern Pikeminnow Hotline
800-858-9015

or go to the website
www.pikeminnow.org

or call
Luhr Jensen Customer Service
800-535-1711