

## Canadian Natural History.

## The Northern Pickerel.

*(Esoc Lucioides. Agassiz.)*

THE accompanying illustration of one of the most powerful and voracious fish of the great lakes, as well as the substance of the following description, are taken from a very interesting and admirable work, by Frank Forester, on "Fish and Fishing of the United States and British Provinces of North America." This fish very closely resembles and has often been confounded with the Mascalonge (*Esoc Estor*) of the same waters, and the European pike (*Esoc Lucius*), with both of which, especially the latter, it is very closely allied, yet clearly belongs to a distinct species.

The Northern Pickerel is taken up to the weight of sixteen or seventeen pounds, but rarely exceeds that weight. It is a remarkably handsome fish, longer and slighter in proportion to its depth than the Mascalonge. Its body is four-sided, the back broader and flatter than the belly; the vertical

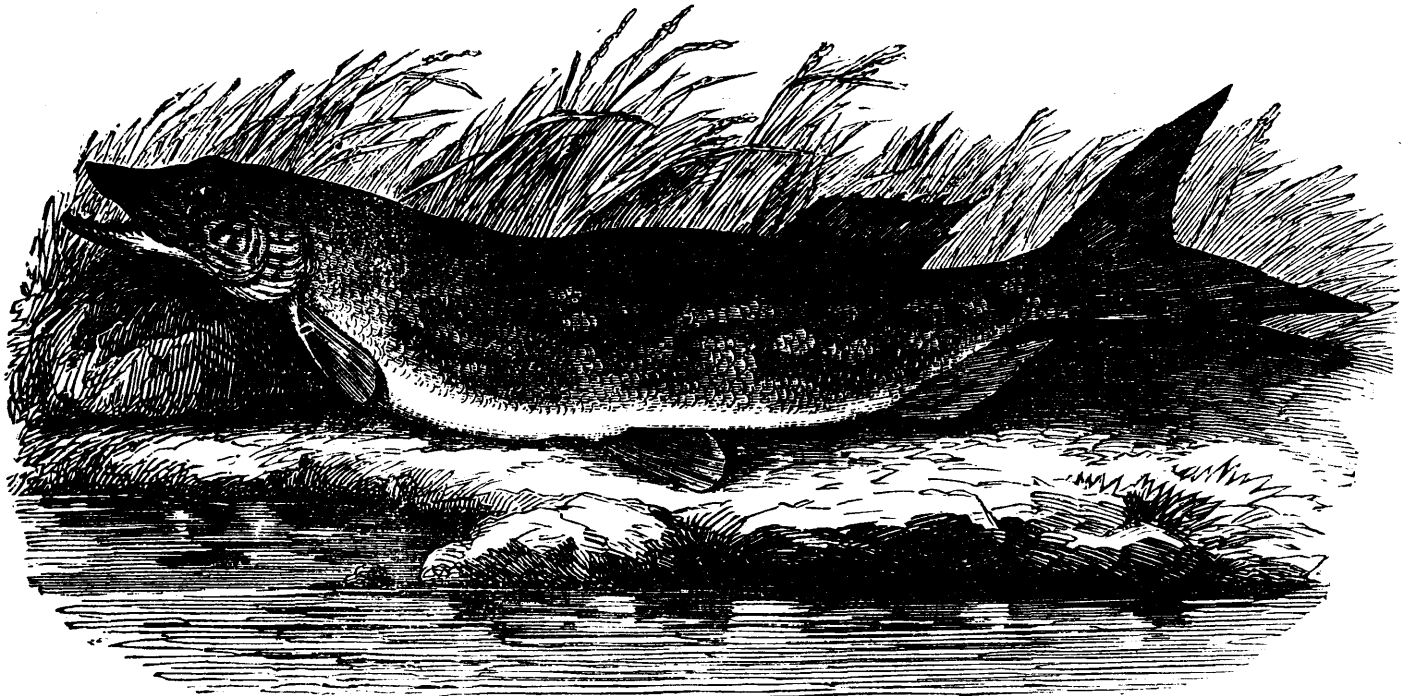
dark spots; the ventrals, the same, with orange tips, but without spots; the pectorals dusky yellow.

The Northern Pickerel is equal in boldness and voracity to the Mascalonge, and to the European Pike, from which he differs in the fin-rays, dental system, gill-covers, and very essentially in the coloring—the Pike being banded or mottled, and having, no indication whatever of the regular rhomboidal spots which mark the sides and form a characteristic of the Northern Pickerel.

He takes any sort of bait in spinning or trolling, and being readily captured by set baits through the ice, forms a very essential article of food to the Indian hunter when the chase fails him. No animal food of any kind comes amiss to this fresh water tyrant. Fish of every variety, even his own species, and the spring Perch, the immature young of wild fowl, rats, reptiles of all sorts—in short, every living thing that comes within his reach, ministers instantly to his voracious appetite. But the baits by which he is most sportingly secured are the small bright *Leucisci*, or shiners, at the end of a double swivel trace, or a live frog, which he can rarely refuse.

return with a new mate. A young friend, to whom I mentioned this, is of opinion that the Bluebird belongs to that family of bipeds who "pair for life." What a sermon in two short words! Shade of the Mormon Prophet, didst thou but consider! The Wrens have failed to take possession yet, which I attribute to the fact that a sagacious old puss, with a view to protect me from rats, has removed, with her family of six, from the barn to the wood-pile in front of the nest.

"By and by, when ripe, I will send you, if I can then find them, some specimens of Canadian Wild Beans. If new to you, they will somewhat interest you. One of these bears an average sized bean, without a pod, in the earth at the foot of the stalk, while above ground are a number of small pods containing the most beautifully speckled lilliputian beans, the sight of which makes you look furtively round for other vestiges of Lilliput; but there is nothing to greet the eye save the sombre giants of the forest, wild leeks, and other herbage of rankest growth, and your dream fades away, "through the Horn Gate," as dreams do and must fade.



diameter is equal to about one-seventh of the body—caudal included; the transverse diameter is two-thirds of the vertical; the body carries its thickness to the dorsal fin, and then tapers into the thin tail; the sides are compressed and flattened; the head is about one-fifth the length of the body; the snout not nearly so long, and much more obtuse than the Mascalonge; the under jaw does not exceed the upper in length nearly so much as in that fish, and is armed around all the forepart with a single row of small, slightly-hooked teeth; on the sides of the lower jaw is a row of larger awl-shaped teeth, implanted in the bone; the palate bones, vomer, and pharyngeal arches, are all armed, as in the other species, with bands of small sharp teeth like carding machines; the tongue is broad, and truncated at the tip.

The back of this beautiful fish is of a rich blackish green, which changes on the sides to greenish gray; there is a bright speck on the tip of each scale, which gives a singularly light and sparkling aspect to the whole fish. The belly is of a lustrous pearly white. There are several rows of oblong, diamond-shaped, yellowish gray spots on the sides of the head, body and tail. The cheeks are varied with emerald green reflections. The under jaw and gill-rays white; the irides purple, with a golden band around the pupil; the dorsal and caudal fins are blackish green; the anals greenish gray, with orange margins, and a few

Professor Agassiz considers this fish peculiar to the great lakes, but it is said to have been very recently found in the Connecticut river, and is supposed to have been introduced there by the breaking out of a new outlet from some mountain lake.

## More Bird Gossip.

In reply to some enquiries made respecting the latest proceedings of the pair of Bluebirds, of which our correspondent from Wyoming gave us recently so interesting an account, "Ben Bearcolt" writes:

"I should have answered your letter immediately, but I could not bring myself to write, merely to say my old friends, the Bluebirds, had quite deserted me. So I waited, hoping against hope, until it was too late for the issue in which you proposed to give my letter. On the morning of the 3rd of June last, a little before sunrise, I was agreeably saluted with the peculiar warbling of the Bluebird. "A good omen!" thought I, and hastened to see. There, on the old perch, sat a male Bluebird, but quite alone. He stayed around three or four days, lingering about his old haunts. That it was my Bobbie I have not the slightest doubt, and if Bob, then a widower. And yet he did not seem like "one who sorroweth without hope," like George Sheldon's "venerable intestate," and I still indulged in the hope that he would

NOTE BY ED. CANADA FARMER.—Having since the above was written received a specimen of the plant referred to, we are able to identify it as the Hog Peanut (*Amphicarpæa monoica*), a delicate vine remarkable for bearing, as our correspondent has noticed, one kind of flower and pod often covered with dead leaves or soil at the base, where usually but one seed is ripened, and near the summit another set of flowers, which are frequently infertile, or produce only minute and imperfect seeds; hence the plant has received its botanical name—*Amphicarpæa*—from two Greek words, *amphi*, at both ends, and *carpos*, fruit. The plant belongs to the natural order LEGUMINOSÆ or Leguminous tribe.

A monstrous sun-fish, weighing over 500 pounds, was captured at New Bedford, Mass., on the 9th.

MONSTER SALMON CAUGHT IN THE WYE.—We (*Field*) have learnt from Hereford that an extraordinarily large salmon was caught in the Wye yesterday (Friday). Its weight was 55 lb.; length, 4 ft 8 in.; girth, 27 in.

LARGE TROUT CAUGHT IN THE TAY.—On Thursday morning, a bull trout, weighing 34 lb., was caught with the net on the Speedies Station at the North Inch, Perth. This is the largest trout ever known to have been got in the Tay.