

- Lake trout are known to inhabit Sherbrooke Lake in Lunenburg County and Dollar Lake in Halifax County, though they have been caught in other lakes around the province. Lake trout are actually char, like native speckled trout. Trolling spoons around deep lakes is your best bet for catching them, or fly-fishing streamers very early or very late in the season.
- Sturgeon live in various lakes and rivers, and on coastlines throughout Nova Scotia. They are very slow-maturing fish, and can grow to enormous proportions. Not considered a sportfish, they are usually fished in other areas with heavy bait-casting reels and rods, with a bait such as salmon egg packages bounced along the bottom. Sturgeon flesh is delicious, especially smoked, and their eggs or roe are used to make caviar.
- Atlantic whitefish are a protected species in Nova Scotia, and angling is strictly prohibited. They are found exclusively in the southwestern part of the province in select watersheds, and not known to be found anywhere else in the world. Before 1965, when they were ruthlessly exploited; they were considered an excellent game fish.
- All three of these species are extremely rare in Nova Scotia. If you target lake trout or sturgeon, or accidentally catch Atlantic whitefish, please return them unharmed to foster future generations.

Mysterious fish fuel imagination

Lake trout, sturgeon and Atlantic whitefish all here, if you know where to look



**JOE FITZGERALD
CHASING PISCES**

The lake was quiet and still, as the faint chill in the air signalled the vacationing masses back to work or school. I was hoping the same still and chill would entice a mysterious fish to stir from one of the deepest lakes in the province, perhaps even enough to strike the large red-devil spoon I had on my line. It was the kind of lure you would use on the Great Lakes or up

north, and the fish I was after was a common inhabitant of those same lake systems.

While I plumbed the cooling depths, I drifted back in time to a hot sunny day when I encountered another rare inhabitant of Nova Scotia's hidden underwater world. While stalking tadpoles and minnows in the weedy shallows of Grand Lake, I saw what looked like a small log rolling back and forth.

Elongated snout

When I approached, I realized it wasn't a log, but a dead fish. It reeked of advanced decomposition, but I could still make out the armour-plated back and elongated snout.

The fish was a sturgeon, and I was surprised to find out the prehistoric creature is found in many lakes and rivers in Nova Scotia.

They have been caught with rod and reel in the Shubenacadie, Stewiacke and Annapolis Rivers, and there is a story of a 15-foot-long (yes, 15 feet) specimen beaching itself near Port Royal.

I snapped back to the present, feeling a twitch on the line. Was it a bite? I couldn't tell. The search for rare fish made me think of a friend who was once fishing the LaHave River for trout and caught what he thought was a nice brookie. When he brought the fish in, he couldn't identify it, though it looked like a cross between a trout and a salmon. What he'd caught was an Atlantic whitefish; fortunately, he put it back. Atlantic whitefish are a trout relative, and a protected species. Because of habitat destruction and overfishing, the last populations on Earth survive precariously in

southwestern Nova Scotia.

My red devil was not producing any strikes, but that didn't bother me. My quarry was lake trout. Not speckled trout that live in lakes, but actual lake trout, the kind you see on fishing shows in northern lakes.

Hard to find

Nova Scotia does have an indigenous population of "lakers," but they are hard to find. There are reports of them being caught only every few years, and I was not really expecting to hook one.

But the thought of these and other enigmatic fish hiding under a dark shroud fuelled my imagination, and as fall approached, reignited my passion to chase Pisces. chasingpiscas@hotmail.com
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