

THIS INVASIVE FISH COULD
SIGNIFICANTLY CHANGE THE
LAKE GEORGE FISHERY

ALEWIFE

Alewife (*Alosa pseudoharengus*) is an invasive fish not found currently in Lake George, but if it is introduced would cause a major threat to native forage and game fish populations. Because they grow rapidly to a dominant population, alewife significantly change zooplankton communities. Alewife compete with other fish for food, primarily smelt, juvenile lake trout and landlocked salmon. Alewife also feed on the eggs of a variety of native species. Lake trout and salmon in other lakes that feed on alewife have been found to have a severe vitamin B deficiency. This deficiency causes a non-infectious disease called "Cayuga Syndrome" in landlocked Atlantic salmon, which has a 100% mortality rate on larval offspring. In lake trout, the deficiency has lead to "EMS" -- early mortality syndrome -- which can effect up to 50% of the young.

Alewife is a silvery green fish with a black spot behind the eye and is closely related to the herring. It



Alewife, if introduced, could cause a major threat to native fish populations in Lake George.

has scales that line up in a row along the belly. Adults can reach six inches in length and live 6 - 7 years. Alewife spawn once a year in late April to June. The female randomly deposits 10,000 - 12,000 eggs. In less than a week, the young hatch. Adult alewife feed on small fish, aquatic insects and zooplankton. They are also used as bait fish. Alewife are schooling fish that generally live in open water most of the year. It has been determined that the extinction of the ciscoe in the Great Lakes was due to the introduction of the alewife.

THE FUND *for* LAKE GEORGE



po box 352, lake george, ny 12845 · (518) 668-9700
info@fundforlakegeorge.org
fundforlakegeorge.org



LAKE · GEORGE
WATERKEEPER®

po box 591, lake george, ny 12845 · (518) 668-5913
info@lakegeorgewaterkeeper.org
lakegeorgewaterkeeper.org

Alewife

LAKE GEORGE FACT SHEET

Alewife were documented in Lake Champlain in 2003 and have grown tremendously in population since then. Massive "die offs" of alewife have been documented, with the cause uncertain, as dead and dying fish wash up on beaches and decay, which cause aesthetic and hygienic problems, reduces recreational use, and hampers homeowners from drinking lake water. Lake St. Catherine, which is connected to Lake Champlain, has major problems with alewife populations threatening smelt.

With Lake Champlain so close, an infestation of alewife is a large threat to the Lake George ecosystem. There are no methods of removing alewife populations once they have become established. Prevention is critical.

Here are the best prevention methods to stop alewife from infesting Lake George:

- Never transfer fish from one body of water to another;
- Always drain water from your boat, live well and bilge before leaving a body of water.; and,
- Never possess alewife for use as a bait fish as this is illegal in Lake George.



There are no known methods of removing alewife once they have become established in a large body of water.

We need your help to protect Lake George from invasive species.

January 2010

THE FUND *for* LAKE GEORGE



LAKE · GEORGE
WATERKEEPER®

