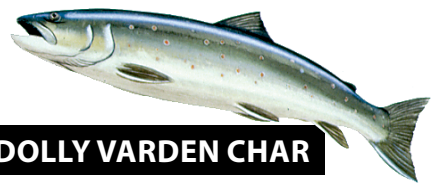
HOW TO IDENTIFY RESIDENT FRESHWATER SPORT FISH FOUND IN ALASKA

CHAR

LAKE TROUT

Dark green to grayish back and light silvery sides with oval or irregular white to yellowish spots. No other Alaskan char species has spots on face and tail. Lake trout also have deeply forked tails, unlike other char, and, although normally lake dwellers, they are sometimes found in northern Alaska rivers.



DOLLY VARDEN CHAR

Bluish gray or silver background with light spots (usually smaller than its pupil). No spots on head or tail. Easily confused with Arctic char, but Dolly Varden occur mainly in rivers, have a more squared-off tail, a more elongated head (especially spawning males), and a wider tail base than Arctic char. Pelvic and anal fins often have a white leading edge.

ARCTIC CHAR

Very difficult to distinguish from Dolly Varden. Arctic char are generally found in the Bristol Bay area and throughout western Alaska, and Dolly Varden are found on Kodiak Island, throughout the waters of southcentral and southeastern Alaska, and on the North Slope. Brown to olive background with light spots (usually larger than its pupil); sides fade to a pale belly.

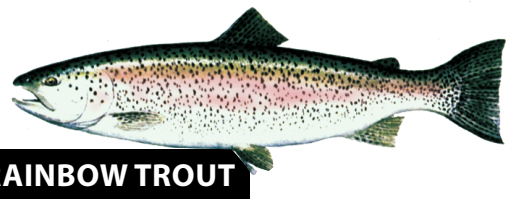
Duane Raver/USFWS

EASTERN BROOK TROUT

Dark green or blue background with white belly; its upper body and dorsal fin have wavy, pale yellow wormlike markings or vermiculations. Its sides have small red or pink spots surrounded by light blue halo rings scattered among larger light yellow spots. The lower fins are white tipped and the tail is square. Not found in marine waters.

Eastern Brook Trout are not native to Alaska and can only be found in a small number of southeastern Alaskan lakes.

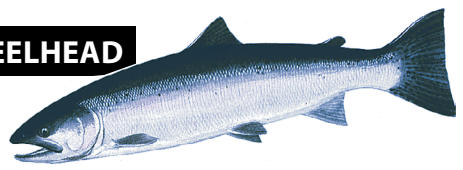
TROUT

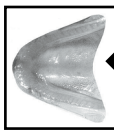


RAINBOW TROUT

Green to bluish back with silvery to yellowish-green sides. Broad pinkish band along side and black spots on back, sides, and tail. Upper jaw usually does not extend past eye on adult.

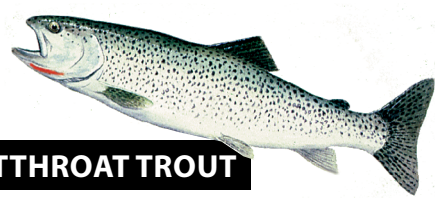
STEELHEAD





White mouth with white gums at base of teeth on lower jaw.
California Department of Fish and Game

Sea-run rainbow trout with bluish gray back and bright silvery sides. Small black spots on back, sides, and tail. Pink/red coloration develops after returning to fresh water to spawn.



CUTTHROAT TROUT

Yellowish-green body with no pinkish band along sides. Many black spots on back, sides, and tail. Upper jaw extends well past eye on adults. Red to orange slash on underside of lower jaw.

ARCTIC GRAYLING

Light copper to dark purple back fading to bluish gray, with black spots from just behind the gill plate to mid-body. Orange stripes on pelvic fins. Large, sail-like dorsal fin with red and aqua to violet spots—iridescent on large fish. Dorsal fin of mature male extends to or past the adipose fin; female dorsal fin is considerably shorter.

NORTHERN PIKE

Greenish back and sides with yellowish white irregular-shaped spots. Flattened head with alligator-like jaws containing many large, sharp teeth. Fins are tinged with orange.

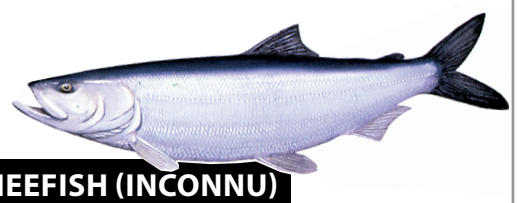
WHITEFISH

HUMPBACK WHITEFISH

Silver-gray with greenish yellow back and fleshy, darker fins. Large scales, small inferior mouth, no teeth. Pronounced dorsal hump just behind gills.

LEAST CISCO

Light silver, slender, herring-like body with small head and small, superior mouth. Gray to olive-green back.



SHEEFISH (INCONNU)

The largest member of the whitefish family. Large jaws with the lower jaw extending beyond the upper. Silvery sides (no spots) and large, prominent, silvery scales. Tail is deeply forked.

BURBOT

The only freshwater cod in North America. Slim, mottled brownish black body with smooth skin (scales are nearly microscopic). Elongated dorsal and anal fins run from mid-body to tail. Flattened head and wide mouth with many small teeth: a barbel (whisker-like extension) hangs from its lower jaw.

To learn more, see species specific information at:
http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=animals.listfish