

LINGCOD—a member of the greenling family, renowned for its prominent teeth and aggressive, territorial nature. Lingcod prefer irregular rocky formations like caves, particularly in exposed areas with heavy tidal movement.

Fish as heavy as 30 pounds are standard, though some exceed 50 pounds. Lingcod are caught with chrome or lead-head jigs, herring, or heads or tails from various marine fishes.

Check regulation book for lingcod seasons and limits!



Other fish found in area streams and lakes are steelhead, rainbow, and cutthroat trout, Dolly Varden char, and Arctic grayling. A chart on page 23 shows the seasonal availability of these fishes in fresh water.

STEELHEAD—the most sought-after freshwater fish in Ketchikan area streams from November to May. The popularity of steelhead stems from their fighting prowess and small population densities, compared to salmon, other trout, and char. Steelhead are sea-run rainbow trout that, unlike salmon, are capable of spawning during two or more years.

Adult steelhead (3–20 pounds, average 7 pounds) return yearly to their spawning streams around the Ketchikan area. Relative to most of Alaska, the Ketchikan area has a large concentration of steelhead streams: ADF&G has identified more than 75. Several larger stream systems with lakes support both spring- and fall-run fish, but most steelhead streams support only the dominant spring-run fish. On the basis of limited information for area streams, ADF&G estimates annual returns of only about 100 to 1,000 adult steelhead to individual area stream systems—for most of these, the returns are fewer than 300 fish.

Anglers fish for spring-run steelhead from early March through May (peak fishing from mid-April through May in most streams), and for fall-run steelhead between late October and mid-January (peak is late November through December).

Drift fishing, with spinning or bait-casting tackle, and flyfishing are both effective. A host of hardware, flies, and other artificials will attract strikes, as will salmon eggs. ‘Steelies’ will at times smack almost any offering, yet they may go ‘off-bite’ during cold spells, low or clear water, periods of heavy fishing pressure, or for no apparent reason at all.

Steelhead are very sensitive to angler-induced mortality from being

Trout, Char, Grayling

deeply hooked, enduring prolonged battles, or rough handling. Because of this, and because of low steelhead numbers, we encourage anglers to practice good catch-and-release techniques (as outlined on page 36) when fishing for wild steelhead.

RAINBOW TROUT—hard-fighting fish which are highly prized by anglers. They are known for a prominent red stripe on the side, but their overall coloration varies widely and reflects habitat or degree of maturity.

Rainbow trout are found in area waters both as freshwater resident and as sea-run races. Sea-run rainbows are discussed above, under “steelhead.”

Rainbow trout up to 18 inches long inhabit some area streams and lakes. ADF&G stocked 37 area lakes with rainbows in the 1960s and 1970s. They can be caught year-round, but fishing is best in spring and early summer—and again in late fall.

Rainbows feed voraciously on aquatic insects and their larvae, small fish, eggs, and crustaceans. Effective offerings therefore include flies, spinners, spoons, and other artificials which imitate their preferred foods. Rainbows can be caught on flyfishing, spinning, or spincasting gear. Be sure that you check sport fishing regulations for area gear restrictions and/or rainbow trout bag limits.

CUTTHROAT TROUT—a popular native fish in area waters. ADF&G has documented 70 resident and 15 anadromous cutthroat populations here. Like rainbows, cutthroat occur both as sea-run and resident in streams and lakes, inhabiting almost any freshwater habitat—including beaver ponds and backwater sloughs.

Trophy fish over 3 pounds have been caught in some freshwater systems, but area lakes and streams do not provide very productive habitat, and cutthroat are slow-growing with low reproductive rates. These factors combine to make them susceptible to overharvest. To conserve stocks, catch-and-release fishing is therefore encouraged.

Cutthroat will strike various lures or flies. Sea-run cutthroat are usually caught in area streams during fall and late spring. Resident “cutts” often hold near inlet stream mouths and along lake margins, especially near vegetation.

Trolling with artificial lures produces nice fish in some lakes during summer, when fish are deeper. There are often excellent catch rates in spring, when salmon fry emerge from stream gravels. Be sure to check area regulations for existing bag limits and gear restrictions.

DOLLY VARDEN CHAR—the only species of char native to area waters, Dolly Varden are known for following adult salmon upstream and feeding on eggs left by ripe female salmon. ‘Dollies’ are

common both as sea-run and freshwater residents in area streams and lakes. They are tasty when smoked or otherwise prepared like trout.

Fishing is usually good from late spring to early fall. Flies and artificials will catch ‘Dollies’ in lakes and streams. Casting or trolling various spoons or spinners along marine shorelines and stream mouths also produces fish.

ARCTIC GRAYLING—introduced into nine Ketchikan lakes in the 1960s and 1970s, grayling are distinguished from trout and char by a prominent dorsal fin. Information on the status of these populations is not presently available.

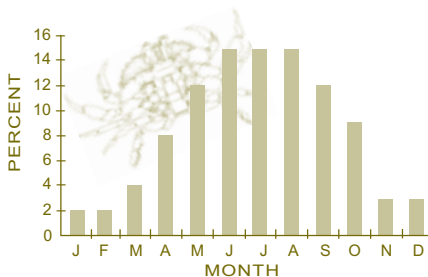
Grayling are sensitive to pollution and prefer cold, clear streams. Their growth rate is slow: most are only 8–12 inches long. Their diet is mainly insects, so you will find flyfishing most effective. Small spinners or spoons will also take grayling.

BROOK TROUT—not native to the area, brook trout were introduced in the 1930s. Eight Ketchikan area lakes contain brook trout. We lack current population statistics for this species of char, but anglers are encouraged to fish for this species. Use small spinners or flies to catch brook trout. The best time to fish for brook trout is midsummer through early fall.

Shellfish



Dungeness crab and shrimp are popular targets, especially in summer. Crab and shrimp are caught in traps, pots, or ring nets baited with fish heads, tails, and viscera.



Seasonal availability of Dungeness crab and shrimp in Ketchikan area salt waters.

WARNING!

The Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation recommends no harvest of mussels, clams, scallops, and other filter-feeding bivalves for human consumption. Those shellfish can transmit paralytic shellfish poisoning (PSP), a potentially lethal neurotoxin, to humans. Direct additional questions to:

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