

HOW TO IDENTIFY TROUT AND OTHER SPECIES FOUND IN ALASKA

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 TROUT



Sea-run rainbow trout with bluish-gray back and bright silvery sides. Slender body profile; 8-10 anal fin rays. Small black spots on back, sides, and tail. Pink/red coloration develops after returning to fresh water to spawn.



White mouth with white gums at base of teeth on lower jaw.

California Department of Fish and Game

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.

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.

ARCTIC GRAYLING



Light copper brown 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.

BURBOT



The only fresh water cod in North America. Slim mottled brownish-black body with smooth skin. Elongated dorsal and anal fins run from mid-body to tail. Flattened head with wide mouth and one barbel (whisker-like extension) hanging from its lower jaw.

SHEEFISH



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.

CHAR

DOLLY VARDEN



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 south-eastern Alaska, and on the North Slope. Brown to olive background with light spots (usually larger than its pupil); sides fade to a pale belly.

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.