

Alaska Freshwater Fishing

More than 130,000 miles of streams cross BLM lands in Alaska. Below is a partial list of some of the better or more accessible fishing waters.

Stream Name	Location	Access	Permit	Season	Species	Notes
Ray River	Fairbanks	Dalton Highway MP 70	+	*	▲	can boat from Yukon River bridge to mouth
Fish Creek	Fairbanks	Dalton Highway MP 114	+			
Bonanza Creek, North Fork	Fairbanks	Dalton Highway MP 125.7	+			occasional burbot & pike
Jim River	Fairbanks	Dalton Highway MP 135.7-144	+			occasional pike & burbot; best access near Mile 135.7 & 144
Koyukuk River, South Fork	Fairbanks	Dalton Highway MP 156	+			
Minnie Creek	Fairbanks	Dalton Highway MP 187	+			
Tea Lake	Fairbanks	Dalton Highway MP 270	+	*	○	access west side near Pump Station 4
Toolik Lake	Fairbanks	Dalton Highway MP 284.3	+	*	○	no camping
Oksrukuyik Creek	Fairbanks	Dalton Highway MP 298	+	*		

Fish advisory: north of the Yukon River, all rivers are closed to salmon fishing within 5 miles of the Dalton Highway (except for Ray River). Anglers may see king and chum salmon in the Koyukuk and Jim rivers and Prospect Creek. North of Aitun Pass, only catch-and-release fishing is allowed for lake trout within 5 miles of the Dalton Highway.
Travel advisory: be sure to park well off the Dalton Highway, but don't block gates to pipeline. This is an industrial highway with high speed truck traffic; windshield damage from flying gravel is common.

Boston Creek	Anchorage	tributary of the Fish River	+	■	●		*	▼	air or boat access only
Fish River	Anchorage	tributary of Golovin Bay	+	■	▲		*	▼	air or boat access only
Kuzitrin River	Anchorage	Kougarak Road MP 75	+	■	▲		*	▼	limited fishing for silvers and pinks
Nome River	Anchorage	Kougarak Road MP 4	+	■	●		*	▼	road parallels river for 20 miles
Pilgrim River	Anchorage	Kougarak Road MP 45-65	+	■	▲		*	▼	road parallels river for 20 miles
Solomon River	Anchorage	Nome-Council Road MP 40	+	■		*		▼	

Big Swede Lake	Glennallen	Denali Highway MP 16	+	*	○		*		access via 3-mile primitive road
**Delta River	Glennallen	Denali Highway MP 21	+						enter via Tangle Lakes, exit at Richardson Highway
*Landmark Gap Lake	Glennallen	Denali Highway MP 24.6	+		○				access via 4-mile primitive road
Fittymile Lake	Glennallen	Denali Highway MP 50	+						park on north side of road
Sevenmile (Boulder) Lake	Glennallen	Denali Highway MP 40	+		○				access via 3/4-mile gravel road
Brushkana Creek	Glennallen	Denali Highway MP 104.5	+						BLM campground

**Birch Creek	Fairbanks	in Steese NCA, 95 miles NE of Fairbanks	+	*	▲				put-in Steese Hy. MP 94.5, exit MP 140 and 147
**Fortymile River	Fairbanks	large drainage basin between Tok and Eagle	+	*	▲				BLM campgrounds at MP 49 & 82
Paxson Lake	Glennallen	Richardson Highway MP 175	+	*	○	+	*		BLM campground & boat launch

*Adjacent lands managed by the State of Alaska **National Wild and Scenic Rivers managed by BLM

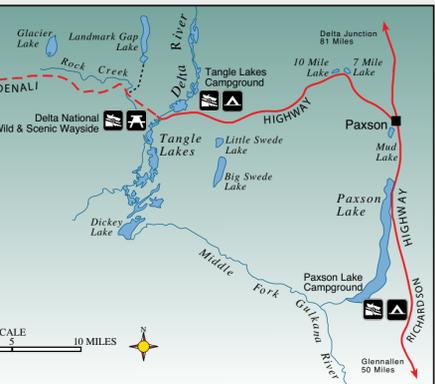
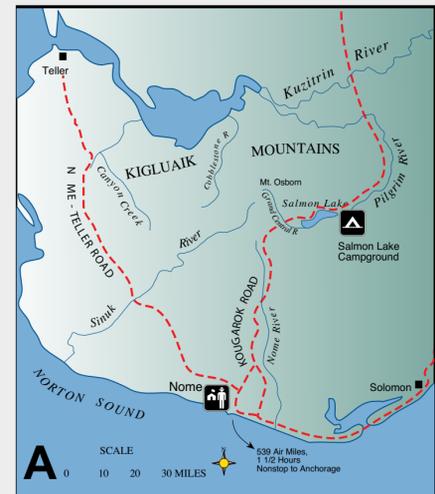


Key for maps:
 Locator maps are for general planning purposes only; other facilities may be available in the area. You can get detailed information from the BLM, the Alaska Public Land Information Center and sporting goods stores for your trip.

- BLM office or information center
- BLM campground
- dump station
- picnic area

Key to Fish Species

- AC arctic char
- AG arctic grayling
- Bu burbot
- DV Dolly Varden
- LT lake trout
- NP northern pike
- RT rainbow trout
- K salmon, Chinook
- S salmon, sockeye
- CO salmon, coho
- P salmon, pink
- CH salmon, chum
- SF sheefish
- WF whitefish species



Find out more about fishing on BLM public lands in Alaska www.blm.gov/ak

Fairbanks District Office
 1150 University Avenue
 Fairbanks, AK 99709-3844
 (907) 474-2251
www.blm.gov/ak/fdo

Anchorage Field Office
 4700 BLM Road
 Anchorage, AK 99507
 (907) 267-1246
www.blm.gov/ak/afo

Glennallen Field Office
 P.O. Box 147
 Glennallen, Alaska 99588
 (907) 822-3217
www.blm.gov/ak/gfo

BLM Public Information Center
 222 W. 7th Ave, 1st floor
 Anchorage, AK 99113
 (907) 271-5960

Before you go

License Requirements
 To fish in Alaska fresh waters, contact the Alaska Department of Fish and Game online at www.adfg.state.ak.us/license/permit.html for sport fishing licensing requirements and purchasing information. State licensing requirements apply to all sport fishing, personal-use, and clam digging in Alaska.

Safety
 Bears and people congregate along Alaska waterways during the summer. Keep a clean camp. Minimize odors to avoid attracting bears. Do not clean or cook fish or store other food near sleeping areas. Get a copy of *Bear Facts* from BLM Alaska offices or Alaska Public Lands Information Centers or visit www.alaskabears.alaska.gov. Know what to do in bear encounters. Always stay alert for bears while fishing and camping in Alaska. Keep your distance if you see a bear.



Always check State of Alaska Fishing Regulations guide for current year bait, hook, and limit restrictions. They vary by water body.

Even though air temperatures are warm in the summer, Alaska waters are cold! Waders are recommended if you want to get closer to the action.

Alaska mosquitoes, flies and other insects are legendary. Carry adequate repellent, head nets and bug jackets.

References
 For licenses and sport fishing regulations, contact the Alaska Department of Fish and Game, Division of Sport Fish visit www.adfg.alaska.gov

For information about planning a sport fishing trip to Alaska, timing of runs, or river conditions, contact any BLM office in Alaska.

Let someone know where you are going and when you will be back. Avoid traveling alone.



Public access

Before you recreate, check land ownership through a BLM office or BLM Public Information Center in Alaska. In some places, you need permission from private land owners or will need to use a public access road, trail, or a 17(b) easement across Native Corporation lands (look for markers) to get to where you want to go. Contact the BLM Public Information Center at 907-271-5960 and learn more about 17(b) easements at www.blm.gov/ak/st/lands_realty/17b_easements.html.

Road vs. fly-in

Despite Alaska's great size, there are few roads in the state. Popular road-accessible fishing spots are often crowded in the summer, particularly on the weekends. You may wish to plan a fly-in fishing trip to a more remote area. Charter operators can fly or take you to uncrowded areas.



Combining a fishing trip with a river float trip can enhance your recreational experience.

While you're there

Angler's code of ethics

Keep in mind that established fishing laws are designed to provide better fishing for everyone, now and in the future. But there is more to fishing than obeying the letter of the law. Commit to respect Alaska's aquatic resources for quality fishing opportunities now and in the future.

- The ethical angler:
- supports conservation efforts
 - properly recycles and disposes of trash
 - practices safe angling and boating
 - obeys fishing and boating regulations
 - respects rights of other anglers
 - respects rights of property owners
 - shares fishing knowledge and skills
 - doesn't release live bait into waters
 - promotes ethical sport fishing
 - supports conservation efforts by taking only the fish needed



Arctic char from Crater Lake.

Preserve Alaska's wild lands for generations to come. Leave No Trace and Tread Lightly!

The Leave No Trace Code of Ethics:

- Plan Ahead and Prepare
- Travel and Camp on Durable Surfaces
- Dispose of Waste Properly
- Leave What You Find
- Minimize Campfire Impacts
- Respect Wildlife
- Be Considerate of Others

Fishing for physically challenged anglers

Sourdough Creek Campground, located 33 miles north of Glennallen, includes fishing ramps, trails and other developments designed to provide accessible opportunities for fishing and hiking along the Gulkana River.

Catch and release

In Alaska, many fish species grow slowly or some may not reproduce annually. By releasing your fish properly, you can improve the odds of your fish surviving and help improve the fishery for everyone.

Under State of Alaska regulations, it is illegal to remove a king salmon from the water for photographic or other purposes if you intend to release the fish. Refer to specific king salmon handling requirements for Alaska rivers you intend to fish.



Fisherman catching and releasing an arctic grayling.

Clip barbs off hooks on lures and flies; never use bait or stainless steel hooks. Bring your catch in quickly so it is not exhausted.

Keep fish in water. Cradle it gently under its belly and tail with your wet hands. Never touch the gills or squeeze the fish.

Keep the fish underwater while removing the hook quickly and gently with long-nosed pliers or a hemostat. If the fish is deeply hooked, cut the line off at the hook.

Point the fish into a slow current or gently move the fish back and forth until the gills work properly. Release the fish when it attempts to swim away.

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The BLM funds and operates a variety of fisheries and habitat management projects with the State of Alaska and federal agency partners. This counting tower monitors returning salmon on the Gulkana Wild and Scenic River. You may encounter such a facility where you are fishing, rafting or boating. Please do not touch or otherwise interfere with its operation. These facilities are used for research, and monitoring, and provide vital information.

Care for your catch

If you are keeping your fish, proper handling begins as soon as it is caught. The preferred method is to kill and immediately clean your fish in the field, then pack it in ice. This will keep the fish fresh until eating time.

Fish should not touch one another or be stored in melted ice water. Never carry or store a fish in plastic bags. It is illegal under State of Alaska regulations to keep caught fish alive on a stringer.

Before you ice fish, drill a test hole in the ice to check the thickness; 6 inches is a recommended minimum. Watch for overflows and be alert for rotting ice as the spring thaw progresses.

(Left) Many lakes throughout Alaska provide opportunities for ice fishing.

After you fish

The BLM would like everyone to have a fun and safe fishing experience for years to come. Please clean up after yourself when leaving fishing areas and campgrounds. Practice Leave No Trace® and Tread Lightly® principles.

Prevent Spread of Aquatic Invasive Species

Take measures to prevent the spread of aquatic invasive plants. They cause serious, irreversible harm to fish and aquatic habitats in Alaska if allowed to spread unchecked.

CLEAN-Rinse and remove visible mud, plant debris from boats, trailers, floatplanes, and gear.

DRAIN-Empty coolers, bilge pumps, buckets and wring out gear before leaving a waterbody.

DRY-Completely dry equipment and gear between visits to fresh water systems.

Never release plants, fish, or other animals into a body of water.



STOP AQUATIC HITCHHIKERS!
 Prevent the transport of nuisance species. Clean all recreational equipment. www.ProtectYourWater.net

(cover) Fisherman goes to grab his catch on the Delta River.



Common Freshwater Sportfish of Alaska

Arctic Char (*Salvelinus alpinus*)
also known as Alpine Char, Sea Trout, Arctic Salmon

Physical Description: Extremely variable color depending on size and habit; freshwater males have dark green backs with silver or blue sides and scattered red or orange spots (but some individuals completely lack spots).

Habitat/Range: Arctic char are found in lakes in the Brooks Range, Kigluak Mountains, Kuskokwim Mountains, Alaska Peninsula, Kenai Peninsula, Kodiak Island, and in a small area of Interior Alaska near Denali National Park.

State Record: 27 pounds 6.5 ounces (2002)

Other: Arctic char are closely related to Dolly Varden, it's difficult to tell them apart. Can be anadromous or remain permanently in freshwater.

Burbot (*Lota lota*)
also known as Lawyer, Loache, Eel Pout, Methy, Lush, Lingcod, and Mud Shark.

Physical Description: A freshwater cod easily identified by a whisker-like barbel at the tip of the chin. Also has a large mouth, small scales, and dorsal and anal fins that extend from mid-body to the tail. Blotchy colors vary from olive/dark green to brownish green to gray, and most have some yellow blotches. Mature fish range from 18 to 45 inches and weigh 1 to 18 pounds.

Habitat/Range: Burbot occupy most large, clear, and glacial rivers as well as many lakes throughout most of Alaska. However, burbot are absent from Southeast Alaska. The largest sport fisheries for burbot are in the Tanana River and lakes in the upper Tanana, Upper Copper, and Upper Susitna river drainages.

State Record: 24 pounds 12 ounces (1976)

Lake Trout (*Salvelinus namaycush*)
also known as Laker or Mackinaw

Physical Description: Lake trout have a deeply forked tail. Typically greenish grey in color, but can vary from silver to black.

Habitat/Range: Lake trout have a broad northern and southern distribution in Alaska, but they are absent from the Yukon River basin of central Alaska

State Record: 47 pounds (1970)

Other: Lake trout are susceptible to overfishing because they have low reproductive potential, grow slowly, and are easily caught. Catch and release fishing is desirable, particularly for the spawners that weigh 5 to 20 pounds.

Rainbow Trout (*Oncorhynchus mykiss*)
also known as Rainbow

Physical Description: Black spots on sides and back, and on dorsal and anal fins; reddish band along the side; smaller than the sea-run rainbows (see steelhead)

Habitat/Range: Freshwater lakes and streams from South-east Alaska north to Bristol Bay.

State Record: 42 pounds 3 ounces (1970)

Sockeye Salmon (*Oncorhynchus nerka*)
also known as Reds, Kokanee

Physical Description: Sockeyes lack large spots on tail and back. They are generally smaller than Chinook, coho or chums. Mature adults average 6 to 8 pounds. Spawners turn brilliant red, with green heads and humped backs.

Habitat/Range: Sockeye salmon range from the Klamath River in Oregon to Point Hope in northwestern Alaska. Sockeyes can be found in the Gulkana, Klutina, Sinuk and Pilgrim rivers, lakes and streams in Southcentral Alaska, and on the Seward Peninsula. Largest sockeye salmon populations are in the Kvichak, Naknek, Ugashik, Egegik, and Nushagak rivers that flow into Alaska's Bristol Bay.

State Record: 16 pounds (1974)

Other: Sockeyes return to their home stream after spending 1-4 years in the ocean. Kokanee are a landlocked, freshwater variety of sockeye. Up to 20 million sockeye are caught in Bristol Bay each year.

Chinook Salmon (*Oncorhynchus tshawytscha*)
also known as King, Spring, Tyee and Blackmouth

Physical Description: Irregular black spotting on the back and dorsal fins and black pigment along the gum line. Ocean chinook are bluish green on their back and silver to white on their sides and belly. Then they spawn, they are red, copper or black. Chinook typically measure 36 inches in length and often exceed 30 pounds.

Habitat/Range: In Alaska, Chinook are abundant from the southeastern panhandle to the Yukon River. Major populations return to the Yukon, Kuskokwim, Nushagak, Susitna, Kenai, Copper, Alsek, Taku, and Stikine rivers. Important runs also occur in many smaller streams.

State Record: 97 pounds 4 ounces (1985)

Other: Yukon River spawners travel more than 2,000 river miles in 60 days to reach headwaters in the Yukon Territory. They use stored body fats for energy instead of eating along the way; possibly Alaska's most highly prized sport fish.

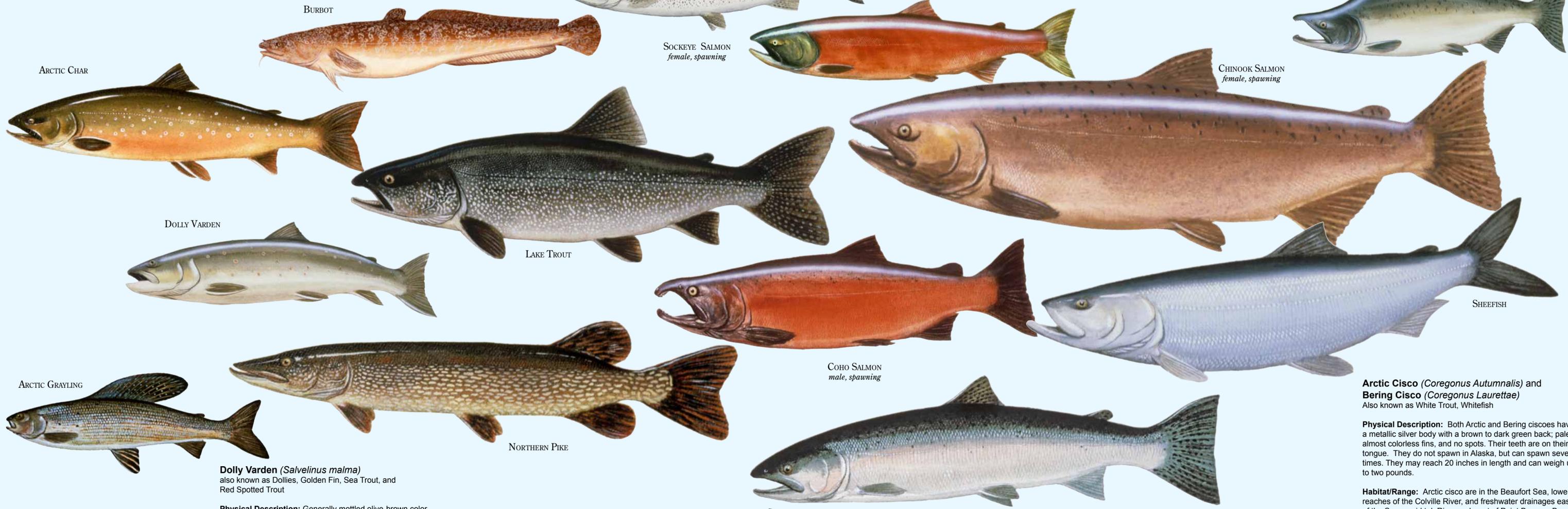
Pink Salmon (*Oncorhynchus gorbuscha*)
also known as Pinks, Humpies, Humpback

Physical Description: Smallest of the Pacific salmon in North America, pinks average 3 to 5 pounds and 20 to 25 inches. They have silver sides and a bright steel blue on the top, with many large black spots.

Habitat/Range: Pinks are widely distributed along the coast, with only a few in the Copper River delta and none in the upper Copper River drainage.

State Record: 12 pounds 9 ounces (1974)

Other: Develop to maturity in only two years.



Arctic Grayling (*Thymallus arcticus*)
also known as Grayling

Physical Description: Distinguishing characteristic is its large dorsal fin. Grayling are a wide array of colors, including silver/purple iridescent colors.

Habitat/Range: In Alaska, grayling have the largest natural range of any sport fish. They occupy nearly the entire state, with the exception of the Aleutians, Kodiak Island, or Southeast Alaska (except for a few stocked lakes). State Record: 5 pounds 1 ounce (2008)

Other: Grayling grow very slowly in northern environments. They overwinter in deep holes in rivers and lakes. Their lifespan is 32 years.

Dolly Varden (*Salvelinus malma*)
also known as Dollies, Golden Fin, Sea Trout, and Red Spotted Trout

Physical Description: Generally mottled olive-brown color, but the sea variety tends to be dark blue or green on the back with silver sides. Both varieties have a red side stripe and red, orange or yellow spots on its back and sides. Dolly Vardens weigh an average of 2 to 3 pounds (anadromous varieties weigh up to 24 pounds).

Habitat/Range: Dolly Varden are one of the most widely-distributed salmonids in Alaska. Found throughout coastal areas from Southeast Alaska across the Gulf of Alaska and the Bering Sea into the Beaufort Sea to the Mackenzie River in northern Canada. Dolly Varden also live in streams in Interior Alaska and the Brooks Range.

State Record: 27 pounds 6 ounces (2002)

Other: At one time there was a bounty on Dolly Varden, as they eat young salmon in streams. They were once classified as a subspecies of arctic char, but are now considered separate species.

Northern Pike (*Esox lucius*)
also known as Northern, Pike, Jack Fish, Hammer Handle, Water Wolf

Physical Description: Long, flattened jaw with many rows of sharp teeth. Pike have a single dorsal fin towards their tail.

Habitat/Range: Range from the Alaska's Interior to the Arctic coast, from the Canadian border to the Seward Peninsula, and southwest to the Bristol Bay drainages. There is a small, isolated population near Yakutat. Northern Pike are considered invasive species in southern Alaska.

State Record: 38 pounds 8 ounces (1991)

Other: Relatively long-lived (greater than 20 years). Pikes are sometimes called "water wolves" because of its aggressive predatory habits.

Coho Salmon (*Oncorhynchus kisutch*)
also known as Silver

Physical Description: Bright silver with black spots on the back and upper end of tail fin and gray gums. Mature adults average 8-12 pounds and 24-30 inches long.

Habitat/Range: Coho are found in coastal waters of Alaska from Southeast to Point Hope on the Chukchi Sea and in the Yukon River to the Alaska-Yukon border. Coho are extremely adaptable and occur in nearly all accessible bodies of fresh water in Alaska, from large trans-boundary watersheds to small tributaries.

State Record: 26 pounds (1976)

Steelhead (*Oncorhynchus mykiss*)
also known as Steelies, Kelt

Physical Description: Generally Steelhead's top of the head, back, and upper sides are dark blue to green or brown and its lower sides are silver, white or pale yellow with a white to gray belly. Steelheads get a reddish band when they return to freshwater, making it difficult to distinguish them from rainbow trout.

Habitat/Range: Steelhead are found in the coastal streams of Alaska, from Dixon Entrance northward, and west around the Gulf of Alaska down to Port Heiden and Cold Bay areas on the Alaska Peninsula.

State Record: 42 pounds 3 ounces (1970)

Other: Steelhead are rainbow trout that spend part of their lives at sea. They will spawn more than once.

Sheefish (*Stenodus leucichthys*)
also known as Iconnu, Tarpon of the North, Shee

Physical Description: Sheefish have a streamlined body. They are silver with darkening on the back and a strong, extended lower jaw.

Habitat/Range: South of the Brooks Range and north of Alaska Range in the Kuskokwim, Selawik-Kobuk, and Yukon river drainages.

State Record: 53 pounds (1986)

Other: Largest whitefish and a unique trophy fish. Unlike most Arctic species, sheefish have rapid growth rates and a 50-pound spawning female can contain up to 40,000 eggs. Sheefish will live to spawn again.

Arctic Cisco (*Coregonus Autumnalis*) and Bering Cisco (*Coregonus Laurettae*)
Also known as White Trout, Whitefish

Physical Description: Both Arctic and Bering ciscoes have a metallic silver body with a brown to dark green back; pale, almost colorless fins, and no spots. Their teeth are on their tongue. They do not spawn in Alaska, but can spawn several times. They may reach 20 inches in length and can weigh up to two pounds.

Habitat/Range: Arctic cisco are in the Beaufort Sea, lower reaches of the Colville River, and freshwater drainages east of the Sagavanirktok River and west of Point Barrow. Bering cisco are in the Bering Sea drainages of the Seward Peninsula, Norton Sound, and Yukon and Kuskokwim rivers. Bering cisco migrate and have been observed 1,200 miles up the Yukon River and 600 miles up the Kuskokwim River.

Other: The Arctic cisco is the most important commercial and subsistence fish species for people of the North Slope villages.

Individual fish identification

This poster is a brief introduction to the most commonly sought sport fish in Alaska. Material has been adapted from *Game Fishes of Alaska* by Laurie Weidlich, the *Alaska Wildlife Notebook* series, and other publications of the Alaska Department of Fish and Game, Division of Sport Fish.

Illustrations courtesy of Alaska Department of Fish and Game, used with permission. Coloration of fish will vary with sex and season.

