

HOW TO IDENTIFY THE FIVE SALMON SPECIES FOUND IN ALASKA

KING (Chinook, tye, blackmouth) SALMON:

Blue-gray back with silvery sides. Small, irregular-shaped black spots on back, dorsal fin, and usually on both lobes of the tail.



Black mouth with **BLACK** gums at base of teeth on lower jaw. →



Spawning king salmon adults lose their silvery bright color and turn maroon to olive brown.

CHUM (dog, keta, calico) SALMON:

Dull gray back with yellowish-silver sides. No distinct spots on back or tail. Large eye pupil—covers nearly the entire eye.



Spawning adults develop olive green coloration on the back with maroon sides covered with irregular dull red bars. Males exhibit many large canine-like teeth.

COHO (silver) SALMON:

Greenish-blue back with silvery sides. Small black spots on the back, dorsal fin, and usually on upper lobe of tail only.



Black mouth with **WHITE** gums at base of teeth on lower jaw. ←



Spawning coho salmon adults develop greenish-black heads and dark brown to maroon bodies.

SOCKEYE (red) SALMON:

Dark blue-black back with silvery sides. No distinct spots on back, dorsal fin, or tail.



Spawning sockeye salmon adults develop dull-green heads and brick-red to scarlet bodies.

PINK (humpy) SALMON:

Large spots on the back and large black oval blotches on both tail lobes. Very small scales.



Spawning adults turn dull gray on their backs and upper sides and creamy white below. Males develop a pronounced hump.



HOW TO IDENTIFY THE *FRESHWATER* SPECIES FOUND IN THE A-Y-K REGION

LAKE TROUT: The lake trout is a char. It can be distinguished from other char by the many whitish-yellow spots covering its head, entire tail, back and sides. 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.

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.



SHEEFISH (INCONNU): The largest member of the whitefish family. Large jaws, the lower jaw extending beyond the upper. Silvery sides (no spots) and large, prominent, silvery scales.



Tail is deeply forked.

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.



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 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.



ARCTIC CHAR: Brown to olive background with light spots (usually larger than its pupil); sides fade to a pale belly. Spawning colors are brilliant orange or gold, and underbody fins have bright white leading edges. Arctic char live in lakes; they have a shorter head than Dolly Varden. Their tail is slightly forked, but not as pronounced as a lake trout, and has a narrower base than the Dolly Varden's.



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.



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.

