

Fresh Water Fishes
of the
Pacific Coast



IDENTIFICATION

by

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Binfords & Mort, Publishers,
Portland, Oregon

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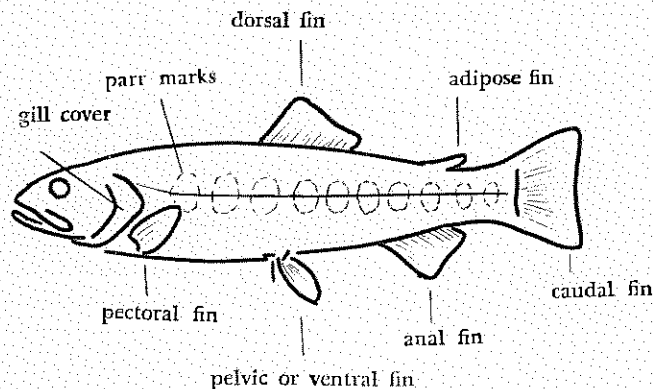
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FOREWORD

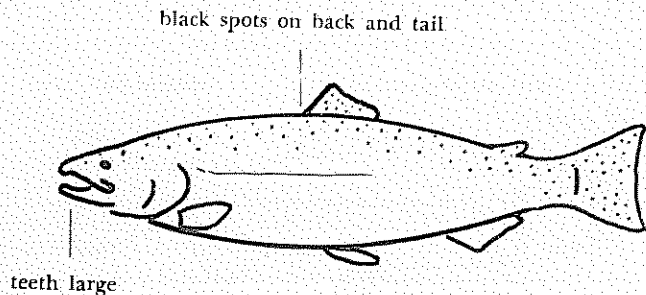
In the identification of particular fish, special reference should be paid to the identities of physical characteristics. The pattern of color is more important than the degree or shade. Climate, food, light, chemicals in the water, and many other factors all work to condition the exact expression of the color pattern inherent to the species. Actual familiarity remains the best means of ready identification. Generalizations have of necessity been made and the only purpose of this little work has been to provide a handy tacklebox guide to the basic types. While a special reference has been paid to Oregon, Washington, and California, the same geographical conditions are applicable west of the Continental Divide.

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The fish is a vertebrate animal usually covered with overlapping scales and gills to breathe in the water. The scales are permanent and grow with the fish. The age of a fish can be determined by the microscopic count of the concentric growth rings — much as with trees. The eyes of fish have no eyelids and they can distinguish but few details of objects. The caudal fin or tail is the principal means of movement and the other fins merely aid in maintaining balance and position in the water.



CHINOOK SALMON

Oncorhynchus tshawytscha

Names: Chinook, Spring, Tyee, Quinnet, King, and Columbia River Salmon.

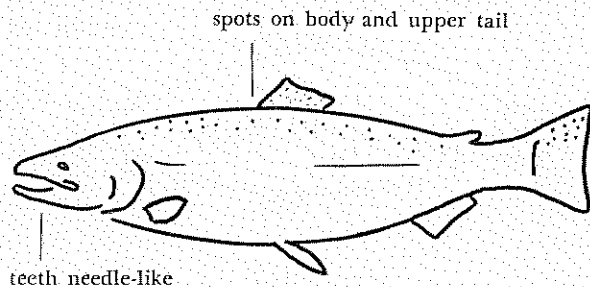
Size: Averages around 20. Maximum 100. 3 to 4 ft. length.

Color: Dusky on back, silvery on sides. Numerous black round spots on the body and entire tail. Teeth large and loose set.

Anal fin: 15 to 17 rays.

Range: Marine and fresh water. California to Alaska—common.

Mature in salt water, return to fresh water to spawn. Spring and summer runs. Spawn in fall.



SILVER SALMON

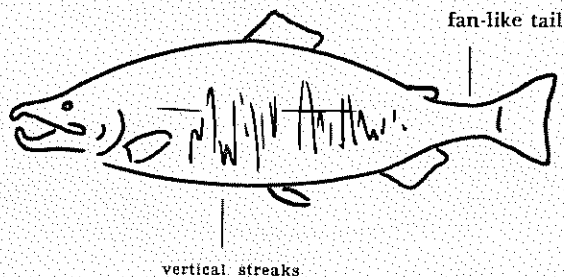
Oncorhynchus kisutch

Names: Silver Salmon, Coho Salmon, and Silversides.

Size: Average 8 lbs. Maximum about 20. Length to 3 ft.

Color: Dusky on back, silvery on sides. Black spots on body and only on upper lobe of tail. Teeth needle-like and firm set. 12 to 15 anal rays.

Range: Marine and fresh water. California to Alaska—common in coastal waters. Spawn in coastal streams. Fall run.



CHUM SALMON

Oncorhynchus keta

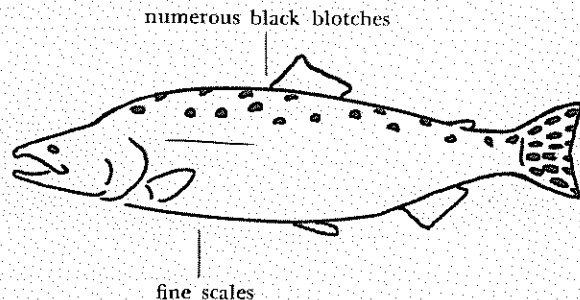
Names: Chum or Dog Salmon.

Size: Around 10 lbs. Length to 3 ft.

Color: Dusky on back, silvery on sides. Red and black vertical streaks appear on the sides as spawning approaches and jaws become extremely distorted. Tail slender and fan-like.

Range: Marine and fresh water. California to Alaska—common.

Run late in fall. Seldom regarded by sportsmen.



HUMPBACK SALMON

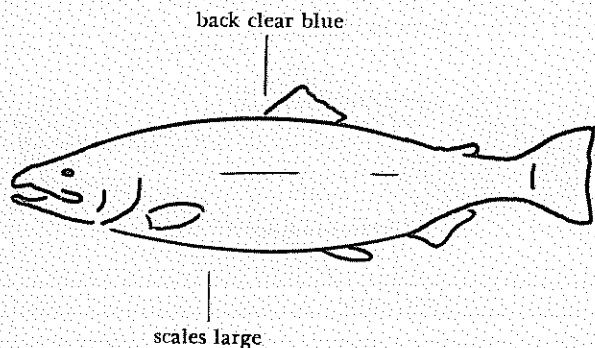
Oncorhynchus gorbuscha

Names: Humpback or Pink Salmon.

Size: 3 to 5 lbs. Smallest of Pacific salmon.

Color: Metallic on back, silvery on sides. Black blotches on back and tail. Scales small. Back of breeding males strongly humped and body blotched with red and brown.

Range: Marine and fresh water. California to Alaska—common. Most plentiful in northern range. Dash into fresh water when sexually ripe with spawn. Little game importance.



BLUEBACK SALMON

Oncorhynchus nerka

Names: Blueback, Sockeye, and Red Salmon.

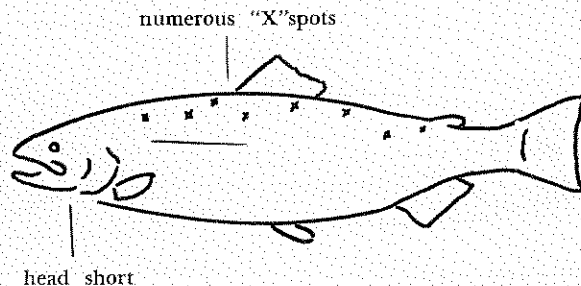
Size: Average 5 lbs. Maximum about 12 lbs.
Length under 3 ft.

Color: Clear blue on back, silvery on sides. Very fine black specklings on back. Body turns very red at spawning time. Scales comparatively large.

Range: Marine and fresh water. Oregon to Alaska — common. Only spawn in rivers draining a lake near its source.

Of little game importance.

The Yank, Redfish, or Silver Trout is a fresh land-locked sub-species of the blueback salmon in miniature. Size about 12 inches.



ATLANTIC SALMON

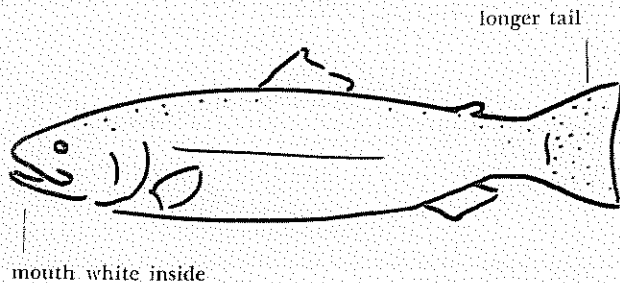
Salmo salar

Names: Atlantic Salmon or merely Salmon.

Size: Average 10 to 20 lbs. Maximum approaches 80.

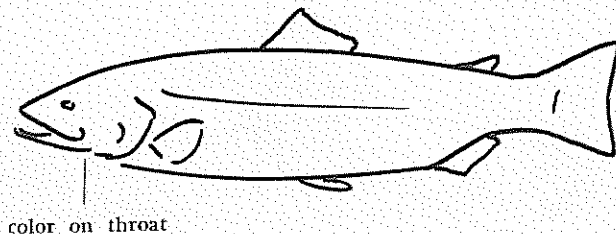
Color: Steely blue on back, silvery on sides. X-shaped black spots on back. Head proportionately smaller than Chinook.

Range: Attempts at the introduction of this fish to the Pacific Coast have so far met with little or no success. Do not die after spawning as do all the Pacific salmons. Would provide desirable summer "steelhead" fishing to western coastal streams. Enter streams in late spring to make spawning runs.



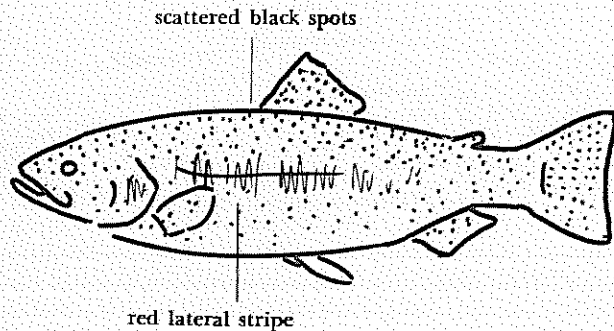
RAINBOW STEELHEAD

A steelhead is merely the ocean migrant of the species of trouts which inhabit the particular streams that provide reasonable access to the sea. In the open salt water, the natural colors fade out to the basic salmon pattern — dusty on the back and silvery on the sides and belly. The colors reappear as the fish return to fresh water. The term "steelhead" is usually synonymous with the sea-run of the rainbow trout. This steelhead is quickly distinguished from a salmon by the white mouth — that of the salmon is lined with black. The lithe body is slender and more graceful in contour. The head and mouth is proportionately smaller. The tail fin is longer. Anal fin — 12 rays.



CUTTHROAT STEELHEAD

The cutthroat steelhead is distinguished from the rainbow steelhead by the orange "cutthroat" color on the throat as this does not disappear in salt water. Other trouts such as the eastern brook, brown trout, and the Dolly Varden are known to move down to the sea. The above can be distinguished by the basic identities of the species that are not obscured by the general silveryness. Individuals grow markedly larger than the fresh water inhabitants. Sizes over 20 lbs. not unusual. Migrations into fresh water coincide with the spawning habits of the species.



RAINBOW TROUT

Salmo gairdnerii gairdnerii

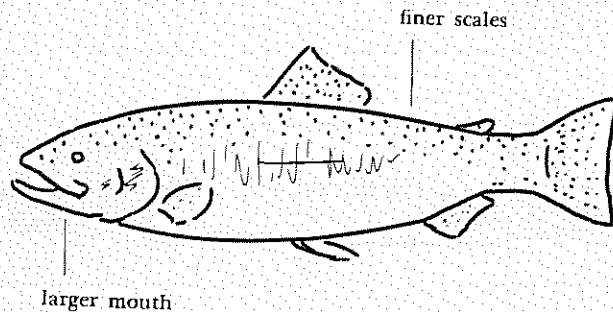
Names: Formerly classified as *Salmo irideus*.

Size: Average between 2 to 8 lbs. in streams, a little heavier in lakes. Over 30 as steelhead. Length over 3 ft.

Color: Body various shades of green blending into light on the belly. Black spots of varying number and intensity often cover the whole body. An iridescent reddish band runs laterally along the sides and often on the gill covers. The head is blunt and the mouth small. The scales are large.

Range: Marine and fresh water. California to Alaska. Very finest of game and everywhere planted in trout waters. The various strains and racial types reported from different localities are now grouped together as a single species — rainbow.

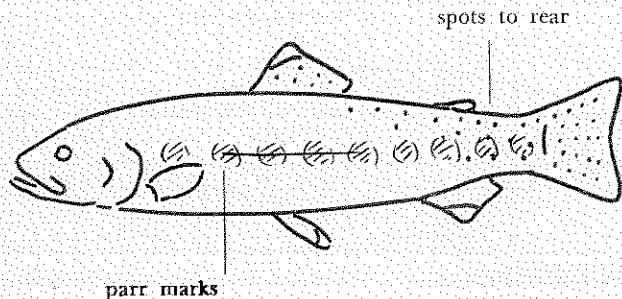
Spring spawners.



KAMLOOPS RAINBOW

Salmo g. kamloops

The Kamloops trout is a fine-scaled rainbow found in the lakes and streams of the upper Columbia River system in British Columbia. There is a 140-150 scale count along the lateral line compared to 125-130 for the average rainbow. The head is said to be comparatively larger in relation to the body. However, these differences are merely conditional and can be altered among the offspring by a change in water temperature. No marked difference in color pattern. Introduced into Lake Pend Oreille, Idaho, the Kamloops there approach records of 40 lbs.



GOLDEN TROUT

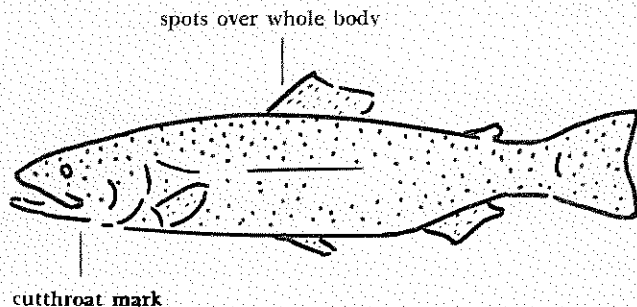
Salmo g. aqua-bonita

Names: Several local types known by particular names.

Size: Seldom more than a pound or 12 inches.

Color: Brilliant little fish with orange along the sides and on the belly. Ground color olive on the back and yellow on the sides. Parr marks persist in the adult. Round black spots are concentrated near the tail. Lower fins tipped with white.

Range: Native to the high altitudes of the high Sierra around Mt. Whitney, these little rainbows have been introduced to other altitudes above 10,000 ft. Colors vary with locality.



COASTAL CUTTHROAT TROUT

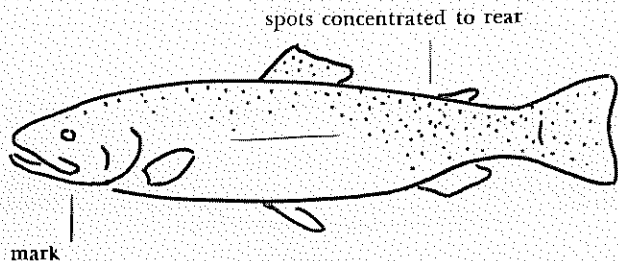
Salmo clarkii clarkii

Names: Coastal cutthroat, Harvest trout, Native trout, Salmon trout.

Size: Corresponds to the rainbows. The cutthroat of the same length will weigh a little less than the stockier rainbow.

Color: The greenish body is profusely covered with black or gray spots even on the belly. These spots tend to fade out in open or sunny waters. The cheeks are lightly tinted with purple and a faint streak of the same runs along the lateral line. The body is slender and the head and mouth are large.

Range: Marine and fresh water. Northern California to Alaska — common. Cutthroats and rainbows are very much alike and it is often difficult to distinguish exactly where one species ends and the other begins. Often interbreed to produce hybrids.



MONTANA BLACK-SPOTTED TROUT

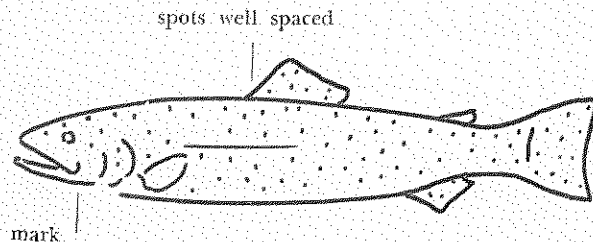
Salmo clarkii lewisi

Names: Montana black-spotted trout, Yellowstone cutthroat.

Size: Usually run a little smaller than the coastal cutthroat.

Color: The black spots are large and concentrated back near the tail. Those on the front of the body are loosely separated and are usually absent from the belly below the lateral line. Ground color often tinged with orange or yellow.

Range: Mountainous in habit from the upper Columbia drainage. Widely introduced elsewhere to colder water conditions. There are several other varietal forms found in different regional drainages — Colorado, Rio Grande, Bonneville, etc. Known as the native trout, these differ only in the exact expression of the basic cutthroat pattern. All the cutthroats are identified by the reddish color on the throat at the lower jaw bone. Often the gills must be spread to be visible. Spring spawners.



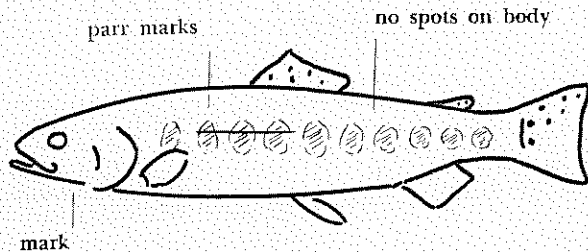
LAKE TAHOE CUTTHROAT

Salmo c. henshawi

Color: The slender body has a metallic sheen and the round black spots are evenly spaced and distributed over the body. Faint pinkish band runs along the sides. Greenish ground color responds greatly to diversified natural conditions. Head is long and pointed.

Range: This is the cutthroat trout of the lake basin of this name in California and Nevada. Has been planted in neighboring interior drainages. Found in lakes and streams.

Sizes go up to more than 10 lbs.

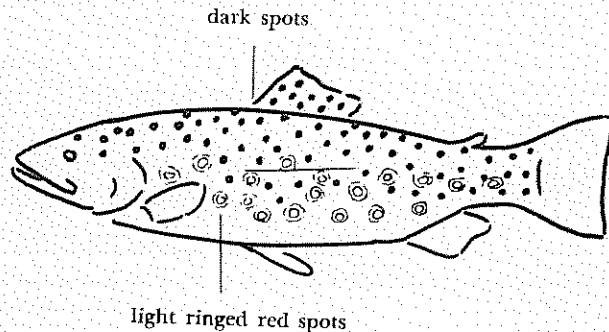


PIUTE TROUT

Salmo c. seliniris

Color: There are no spots on the slender body and only a few on the dorsal and caudal fin. Ground color changeable among shades of green. Soft brownish parr marks persist along the orange tinted sides. Lower surfaces are ivory white. Cutthroat marks on the throat usually plain. Lower fins are fragile. Scales are very fine. Length is under 12 inches.

Range: The Piute trout is an isolated variant of the Lake Tahoe cutthroat found originally in remote alpine country of California. Protected to further survival of its identity. There are many other instances where geographical isolation has shaped similarly unusual forms of the basic cutthroat and rainbow types. The Royal Silver trout of Lake Tahoe, the Crescent trout, Pyramid Lake trout, Eagle Lake trout, etc.



BROWN TROUT

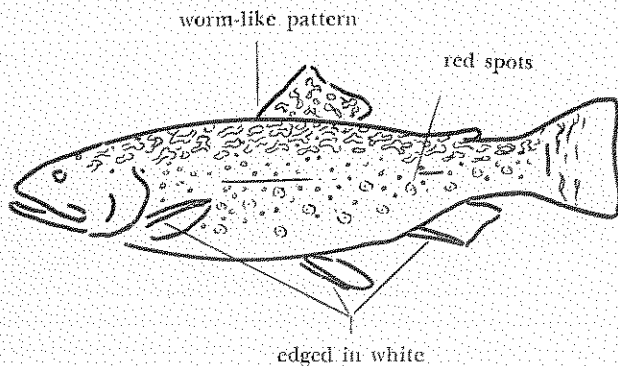
Salmo trutta

Names: Brown trout, German brown, European trout.

Size: Up to 10 lbs. in streams, larger in lakes.

Color: Distinguished by large red spots on the sides. Heavy dark spots cover the upper surfaces. All the spots are often ringed with a light color and particularly the red spots. The ground color varies among shades of browns tinted with green. The belly is cream colored and the lower fins are usually not spotted.

Range: Marine and freshwater. California north to Canada—common where introduced. The brown trout can thrive in warm waters unsuited to other trouts and are widely planted where fishing pressures are heavy. Winter spawn.



BROOK TROUT

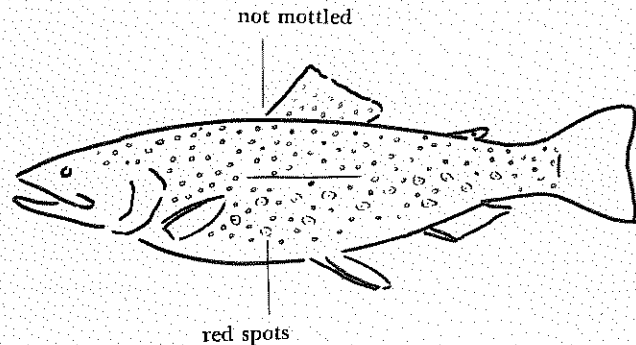
Salvelinus fontinalis

Names: Brook trout, Speckled trout, Eastern brook, Eastern charr.

Size: Several pounds, seldom more than 8 lbs.

Color: The general color is a blackish green. They become quite light and silvery in the summer. Tiny red spots are set in halos on the sides. Small yellow spots cover the body and a mottled worm-like pattern shows on the back. Breeding males become orange on the belly. The paired and anal fins are strongly edged in white. The tail is square. The scales are fine. The body is robust and the head and mouth large.

Range: Marine and freshwater. California to Canada — common where introduced. Very desirable game fish and widely planted, especially in colder mountain and spring-fed waters. Not a true trout, but is classed as a charr. Autumn spawners.



DOLLY VARDEN

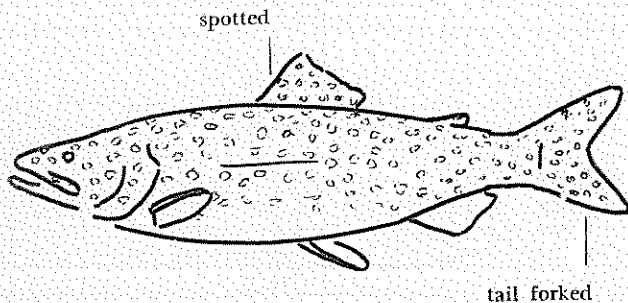
Salvelinus malma

Names: Dolly Varden, Bull trout, Western Charr.

Size: Larger than the brook trout, occasionally over 20 lbs.

Color: Very much like the eastern brook except for the absence of the marbling on the dorsal surface. Color often almost black. The body is more slender and gummy in contour. Scales fine.

Range: Marine and freshwater. Northern California to Alaska. The Dolly Varden is the native cousin of the eastern brook but it does not rank so high as a desirable game fish. Destructive to spawn of trouts and salmons. Most plentiful in northern range. Autumn spawning.



LAKE TROUT

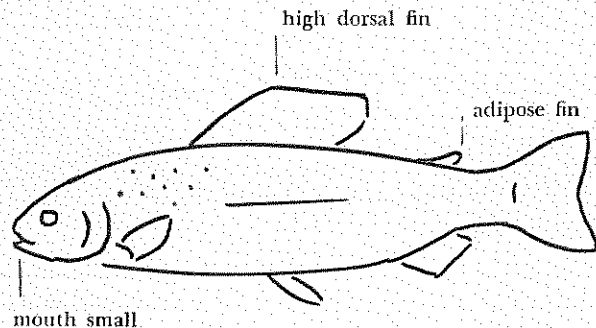
Christivomer namaycush

Names: Lake trout, Mackinaw trout, Togue, Great Lakes trout.

Size: Commonly over 20 lbs., maximums approach 100. 4 ft. in length.

Color: Body a dark grayish covered over all with large light colored spotting. The head is long and the mouth is large. The tail is slender and the tail fin deeply forked. The scales are small.

Range: Introduced to some of the larger lakes where the species still persists altho no longer planted or encouraged.



GRAYLING

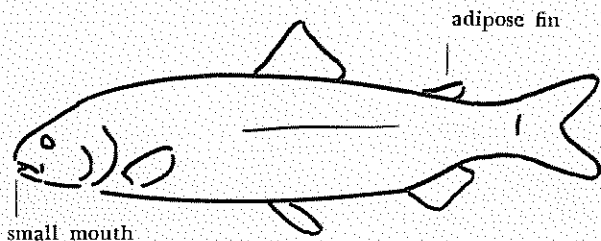
Thymallus signifer tricolor

Names: Grayling, Montana grayling, Michigan grayling.

Size: Seldom more than a couple of pounds. 24 inches.

Color: The grayling is immediately identified by the high sail-like dorsal fin which is lightly patterned with brilliant colors. The general color is a mottled silvery and green. There are a few black spots on the front of the body. The mouth is small and the body is slender and trout-like. The presence of the adipose fin indicates the relationship with the trout family.

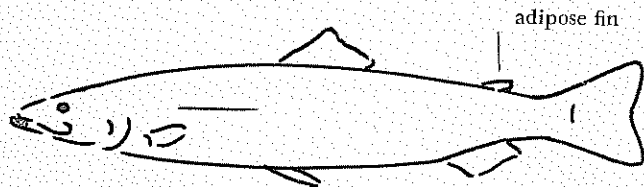
Range: Native to northern Rockies and planted elsewhere to high mountainous and cold waters. Not common anywhere. Fine game.



WHITEFISH

Family—*Prosopium*

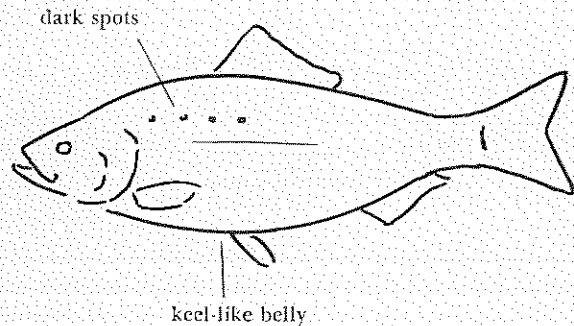
The whitefishes are silvery fishes that are dusky on the dorsal surfaces and white on the belly and lower fins. The mouth is very small. There are many species that are very much alike. They are indicated from often similar appearing fishes of the minnow family by the presence of the adipose fin. They are related to the grayling and are trout-like in habit and game. Sizes up to 18 inches. Common everywhere in lakes and streams of cold clear mountainous waters.



SMELTS

Family—*Osmeridae*

The smelts are small silvery herring-like fishes that are identified by the presence of the adipose fin. Physically they are a salmon in miniature. Live in the deep sea and come in shore to the surf or fresh water to spawn. Many different species that range in size from a few inches to nearly a foot. California to Alaska — common to streams and ocean beaches. The Eulachon or Columbia River smelt is the largest and best known.



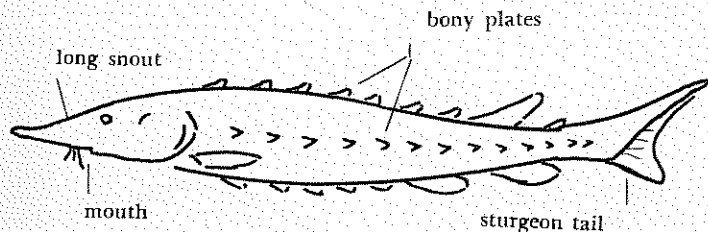
SHAD

Alosa sapidissima

Color: The shapely body is covered with large silvery scales and the belly is compressed and keel-like. The dorsal surface is blue and several black spots appear in a row along the body. Tail is forked. The upper jaw is notched to fit the lower jaw.

Size: Average around 5 lbs. to a maximum of 14. Length 28 inches.

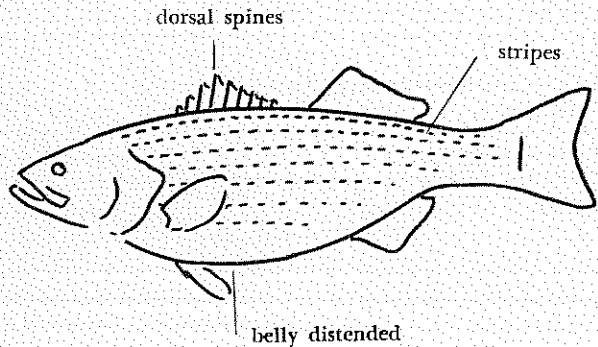
Range: Introduced. Coastal streams from California to Alaska. The shad is a large herring that lives in the sea and migrates into fresh water to spawn. Late spring run.



STURGEON

Family—*Acipenseridae*

The sturgeons are primitive fishes with protective rows of bony plates on the head and body. The snout is long and the toothless mouth is underneath. Sturgeons are bottom feeders that suck in their food. There are several species and individuals often grow to tremendous sizes. 100 pound ones are common and records go well over a half a ton and a 15 ft. length. Move both in the sea and the larger rivers from California to Alaska. Protected by game laws in many localities.



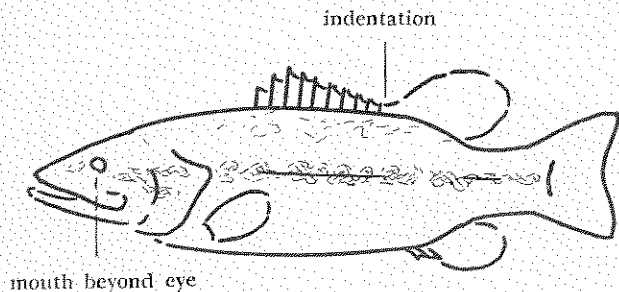
STRIPED BASS

Morone saxatilis

Color: The body is a silvery greenish with strong brassy overtones. Longitudinal stripes run along the sides. The mouth is large and the belly distended. There are two sets of dorsal fins. The tail is forked.

Size: Weights run from 5 to 20 lbs. May reach over 4 ft. and weights approaching 80 lbs.

Range: Introduced. Monterey peninsula to the mouth of the Columbia River. Common in coastal waters around bays and the estuaries of the larger rivers. Spawn in brackish water.



LARGEMOUTH BLACK BASS

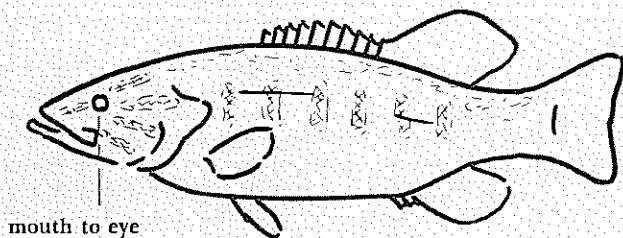
Micropterus salmoides

Names: Largemouth black bass, Black bass, Green bass.

Size: Seldom over 8 lbs. or 24 inches in length. Maximum — 15 lbs.

Color: The chunky body is silvery green becoming very dark on the back. An irregular black band runs along the sides of the young fish and this occasionally persists in the mature fish. The mouth is large and the corners extend well beyond the eye when closed. There is a deep notch to almost separate the two dorsal fins.

Range: Introduced. California to Canada. This is the largest of the warmwater group of spiny-ray sunfishes. Fine game and widely planted — common. The largemouth thrives in weedy lakes and streams with soft bottoms. Late spring spawners.

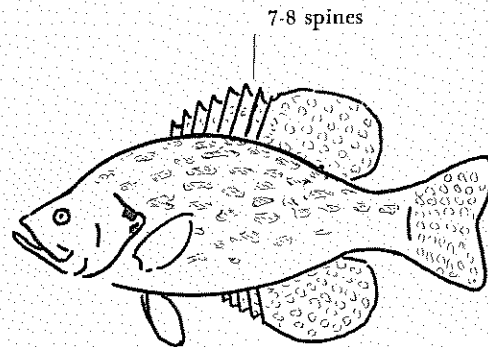


SMALLMOUTH BLACK BASS

Micropterus dolomieu

Color: The smallmouth bass is very similar to the largemouth but can be distinguished by particular details. The mouth only reaches back to the eye and the dark patterns on the body tend to form vertical bars on the sides. The spinous rays of the dorsal fin are all about the same size and there is no marked indentation between the dorsals. Soft dorsal rays 14 compared to 12 or 13 in the largemouth. The smallmouth has scales along the base of the dorsal and anal fins. The body scales are smaller. Size is usually smaller than the largemouth.

Range: Introduced. California to Canada — not common. The smallmouth is the black bass of flowing and rocky bottomed waters. Trout-like in haunt and habit.



CALICO BASS

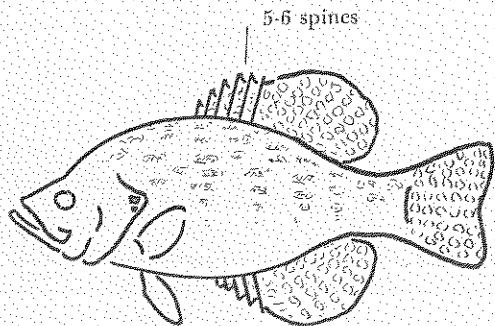
Pomoxis nigro-maculatus

Names: Calico bass, Black crappie, Strawberry bass, Papermouth.

Size: A pound and 14 inches. Occasionally 3 lbs.

Color: A popular panfish with a silvery green body irregularly patterned with dark blotches. The mouth is large and the jaw tissues thin. The mottled dorsal and anal fins are about the same length. The calico bass has 7 or 8 dorsal spines.

Range: Introduced. California to Canada. This is one of the most popular of all the panfishes. Common in warmer lakes, ponds, and sloughs. Late spring spawning.



CRAPPIE

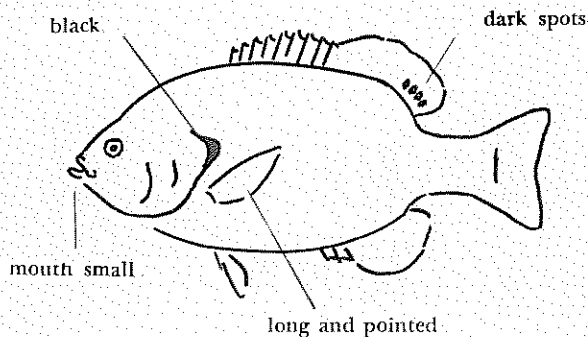
Pomoxis annularis

Names: Crappie, White crappie, Tinmouth.

Size: A little less body depth than the calico bass.

Color: Lighter in tone than the calico bass. The black markings tend to form vertical streaks. There are only 5 or 6 dorsal spines.

Range: Same as calico bass and of equal numerical importance.



BLUEGILL

Lepomis macrochirus

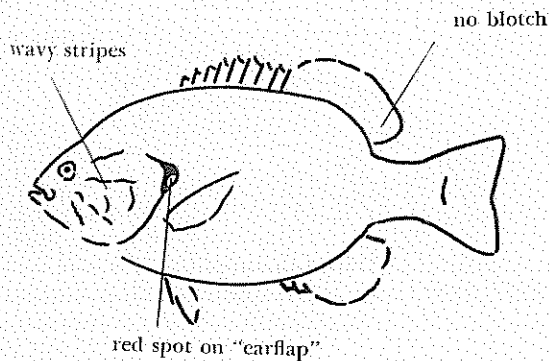
Names: Bluegill, Bream, Bluegill sunfish.

Size: Around a pound and 12 inches.

Color: The typically rounded and compressed body is a green or blue, becoming quite silvery on the sides. Several faint vertical bars extend toward the belly. There are no bright dapplings of color, but the fore belly is tinged with orange. The earflap of the gillcover has a heavy black spot. Dark blotches are found on the soft dorsal fin. The mouth is very small. The pectoral fins are long and pointed.

Range: Introduced — common. Finest of all the panfishes.

Warm lakes and ponds where planted.



PUMPKINSEED

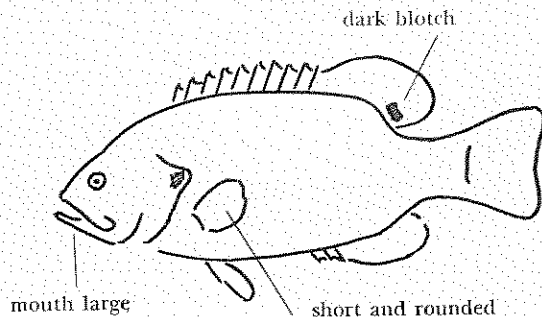
Lepomis gibbosus

Names: Pumpkinseed, Common sunfish, Pond perch.

Size: A little smaller than the bluegill.

Color: Physical details similar to the bluegill, but the color patterns are dappled thru the full range of the rainbow. The checks are patterned with wavy streaks. There is a distinct red spot on the earflap. No blotch on the dorsal fin.

Range: Introduced — common. Habit same as bluegill.



GREEN SUNFISH

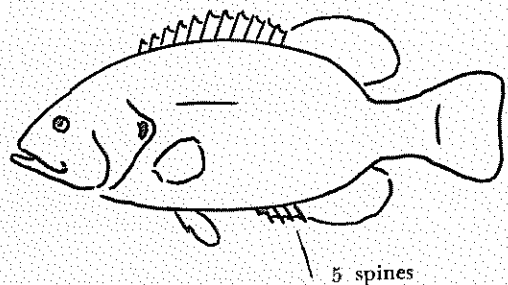
Lepomis cyanellus

Names: Green sunfish, Blue bass, Creek sunfish.

Size: 6 inches and a half a pound.

Color: Small and chunky of body. Mouth is very large and the pectoral fins are short and rounded. Color a dark green with the dorsal, anal, and caudal fins often edged in yellow. There is a small dark blotch on the dorsal fin. Eyes are a dull red.

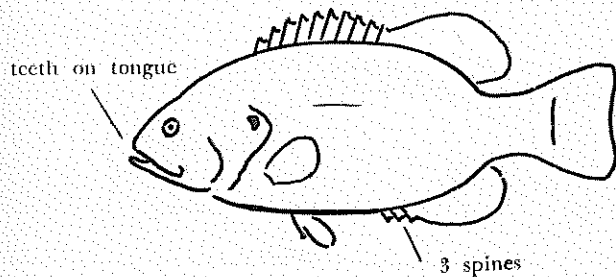
Range: Introduced — common. Typically creeks and small ponds.



ROCK BASS

Ambloplites rupestris

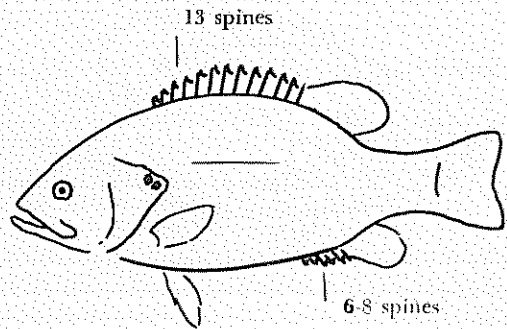
The rock bass is a greenish fish with a very heavy body. The mouth is large and the eyes a distinct red. The length runs up to around 12 inches. There are 5 spines to the anal fin. They have been introduced to the west coast but are rare. Rocky streams are the usual habitat.



WARMOUTH BASS

Chaenobryttus coronarius

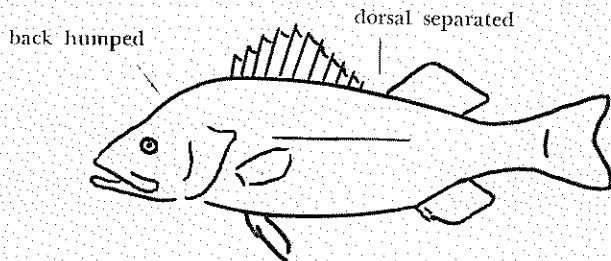
The warmouth bass superficially resembles the rock bass. Most reports of the presence of the rock bass turn out to be the warmouth. The warmouth has only 3 anal spines and there is a small patch of teeth on the tongue. The color is almost black with a strong purplish overcast. Weight about a pound. Introduced — not common. Weed and mud bottomed waters are their habitat.



SACRAMENTO PERCH

Archoplites interruptus

The Sacramento perch is the only one of the spiny-ray sunfishes that is native west of the Rocky Mountains. The range is limited to the central valleys of California. No longer abundant. Color very dark with irregular vertical bars on the sides. There are 12 or 13 dorsal spines and 6 or 8 spines in the anal fin. Sizes run up to several pounds. Lakes and rivers.



YELLOW PERCH

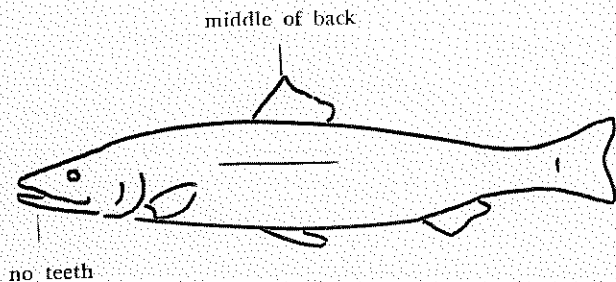
Perca flavescens

Names: Yellow perch, Raccoon perch, Ringed perch.

Size: One or two pounds, rarely 4. 14 inches.

Color: The back is blackish and the sides are golden or yellow. Several dark bands extend vertically toward the belly. The lower fins are orange. The back is humped directly behind the head and the spiny dorsal is high and separated from the soft fin.

Range: Introduced. Common in lakes.



SQUAWFISH

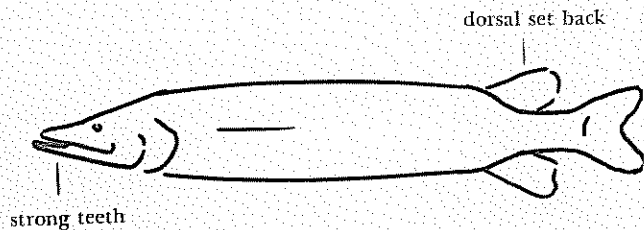
Genus—*Ptychocheilus*

Names: Squawfish, Pike, Native pike.

Size: Pike-like in size, up to 3 or 4 ft. and over 10 lbs. Individuals may reach 80 lbs. in rare instances. This is the largest of the North American minnow family.

Color: Body long and slender. The head is long and the mouth large and toothless. The teeth are deep in the throat. A single dorsal fin sets in the middle of the back. The back is of dusky shades and the sides are silvery.

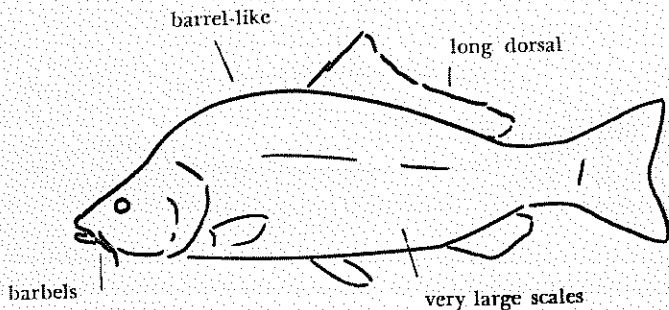
Range: There are several species of squawfish indigenous to the different western river drainages—the Columbia, Colorado, the Sacramento, etc. Often common. Lakes and rivers. This is not a true pike. Squawfish is the more proper name.



PIKES

Genus—*Esox*

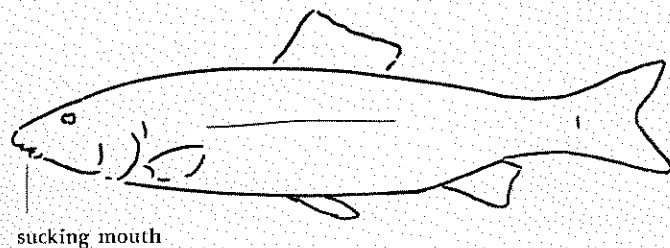
The true pikes are not native to western waters and a few early attempts at introduction failed except for a dwarf species (*Esox vermiculatus*) now found in parts of northeastern Washington. The pikes have long slender bodies with the dorsal fin well to the rear to almost pair with the anal fin. The tail is powerful and the pikes are admirably built for explosive speed. There are many species. Often grow to huge sizes. Muskellunge often reach more than 40 lbs. Fine game but damaging to other fish.



CARP

Cyprinus carpio

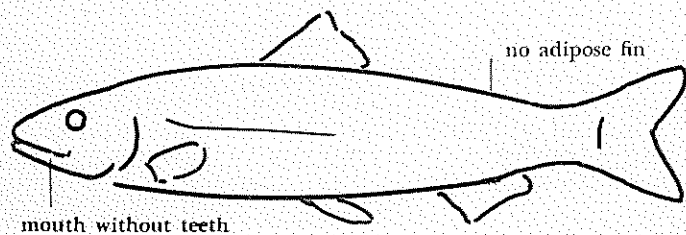
The carp is a barrel-bodied fish with very large scales and a toothless sucking mouth. There are two pairs of barbels at the mouth. The dorsal fin is long with a single spine on the front. The color is a greenish dusky becoming yellowish on the undersides and reddish on the fins. Reaches over 2 ft. and the maximum is 50 lbs. Introduced and fairly common. Rivers, lakes and sloughs. Bad reputation. Good eating.



SUCKERS

Family—*Catostomidae*

The suckers are long slender fishes with rounded bodies and a sucking mouth which is usually under the snout. The back is a dark tone that blends by degrees into whitish on the belly. Grow to several feet in length and up to 8 or 10 lbs. Native everywhere and common. While the flesh is bony, suckers are edible. Young suckers are important forage for game fishes.



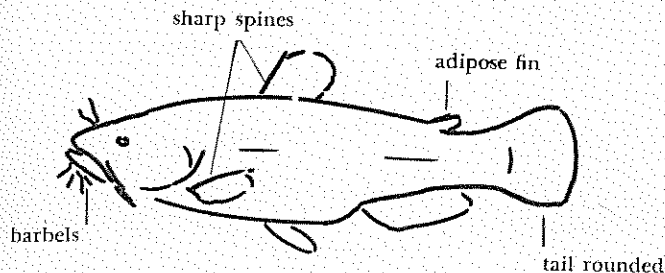
mouth without teeth

no adipose fin

MINNOWS

Family—*Cyprinidae*

The various species of chubs, dace, and shiners are all members of the basic family of minnows. These are closely related to the carp and are structurally akin. The sizes of the different species range from a few inches at maturity to over 16 inches and in the case of the squawfish, more than that. The mouth is always toothless. The only teeth are deep in the throat where the prey is gulped and crushed. There is no adipose fin. These silvery fishes are found everywhere in fresh water.



sharp spines

adipose fin

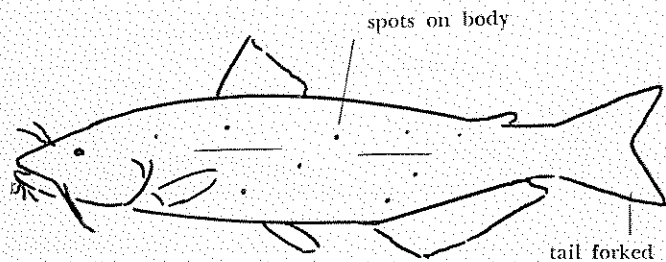
barbels

tail rounded

CATFISHES

Family—*Ameiuridae*

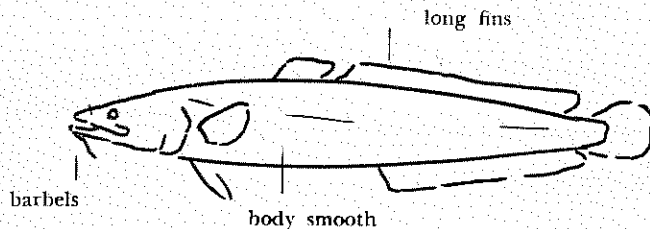
The fishes of the catfish family have characteristics that are unmistakable. The skin is smooth and scaleless. The head is large, and ugly barbels or whiskers are about the gaping mouth. The initial spines of the dorsal and pectoral fins are sharp and often dangerous. Although showing no evident relationship with the salmon family, there is an adipose fin. The body is dark and muddy in color. The smaller species of catfish are popularly called bullheads and are distinguished by the rounded tail. Some species of catfish grow to well over 25 lbs. The blue catfish attains 150 lbs. Introduced—common. Lakes, ponds, and sloughs.



CHANNEL CAT

Ictalurus punctatus

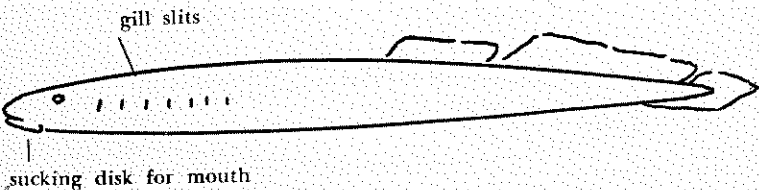
This is the finest of all the various catfishes and is identified by the slender graceful shape and the strongly forked tail. There are 24 to 29 rays in the anal fin. The body is bluish and spotted with black. The channel cat is an active feeder out in the clean flow of the current. Sizes run up to 25 lbs. Introduced, but not yet common. Gaining a foothold in the lower Columbia River and possibly elsewhere.



BURBOT

Lota maculosa

The burbot, ling, or lake lawyer is a freshwater cod fish found in the deep lakes of the Columbia River drainage and northward. The body is smooth with tiny imbedded scales. The dorsal and anal fins are long and the tail is rounded. The mouth is large with a barbel under the chin. The general color is a marbled olive and black. Ugly appearing but edible.



PACIFIC LAMPREY

Entosphenus tridentatus

The lamprey is an eel-like fish with a large sucking disc for a mouth. Bony rasping teeth are inside. The body is a dark bluish gray and the length reaches 2 ft. Gill pores open along the body. The dorsal fin is long. Live in saltwater and enter coastal streams to spawn in fresh water. California to Alaska — common. Edible before spawning.