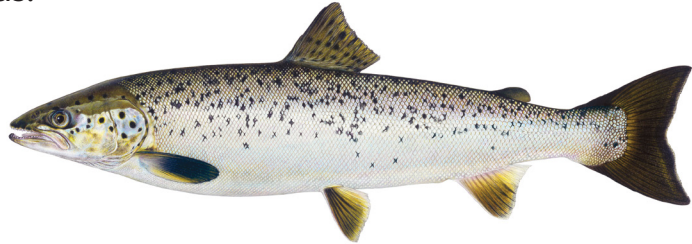


# Know your Great Lakes Trout & Salmon Species

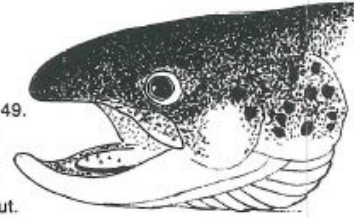
Anglers on the Great Lakes have the opportunity to catch a variety of species - including many different salmon and trout. Often times these species can look very similar to one another. This document provides some tips for identifying the most commonly caught Great Lakes trout and salmon species.

**Atlantic Salmon:** This native of the north Atlantic Ocean is known throughout the world as an exciting sportfish. It was introduced into the Great Lakes in 1972. The average adult lake-run Atlantic salmon weights 8-10 pounds. Michigan's record is 32.62 pounds.

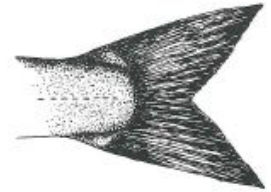


## Atlantic Salmon

Anal rays — 9.  
Gill rakers — 18-24.  
Lateral line scales — 109-121. Scale rows around peduncle — 45-49.  
Upper lip — extends to rear of eye.  
Tongue — pointed with 5-6 weak teeth.  
Look-alike — Brown trout.



No spots on tail. X-like spots on body. Tail forked. Pectoral fins are very dark.  
Hard bony plates in tail will not compress, making it possible to hold them by tail.

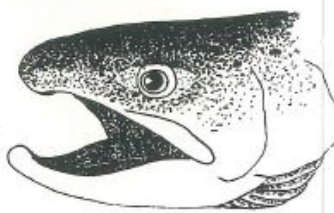


**Chinook (King) Salmon:** This species is native to the Pacific Ocean from Southern California to Alaska. Michigan introduced Chinooks to the Great Lakes in 1967. Weights typically run from 20-30 pounds. Michigan's record is 48.06 pounds.

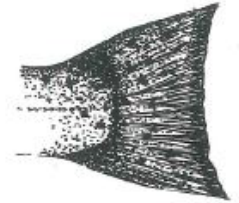


## Chinook (King) Salmon

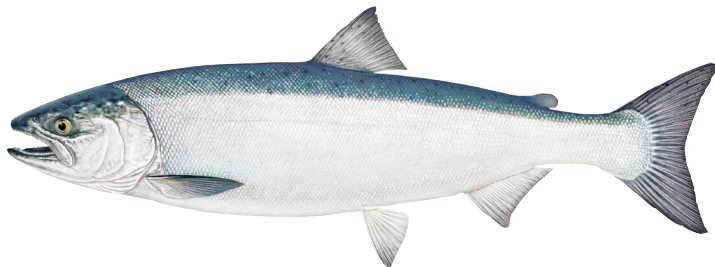
Mouth — black.  
Anal rays — 15 to 17.  
Color — silvery before spawning. Dark during spawning.



Large black spots over tail and upper portion of body.

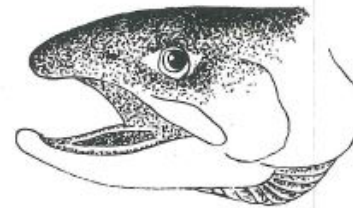


**Coho Salmon:** This species is also native to the Pacific Coast of North America. Michigan first started stocking cohos in 1966. Adults average 8 pounds. Michigan's record is 30.56 pounds.

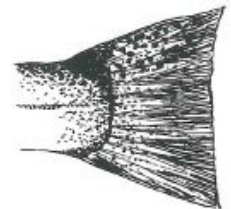


## Coho (Silver) Salmon

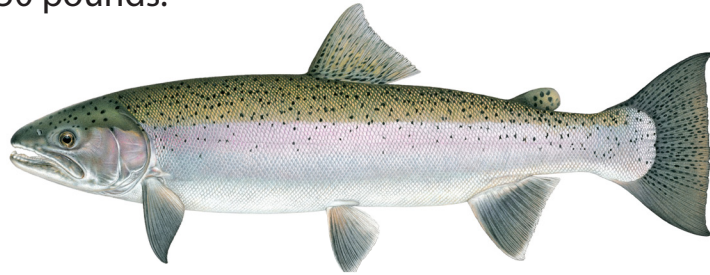
Mouth — dark, gums whitish. Anal rays — 13 to 15.  
Color — silvery before spawning. Dark during spawning.  
Look-alike — Rainbow.



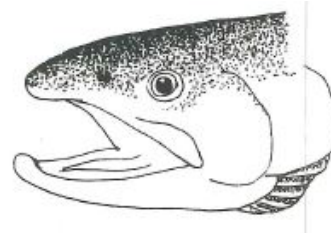
Small spots on upper portion of tail.



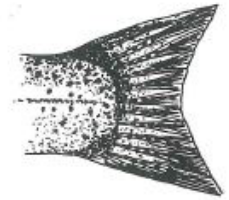
**Rainbow (Steelhead) Trout:** This species lives, grows and reaches spawning size in the Great Lakes. They are native to the North American coastal streams of the Pacific Ocean. Average adult size for Great Lakes steelhead is 9-10 pounds. Michigan's record is 26.50 pounds.



**Rainbow (Steelhead) Trout**  
Mouth — white.  
Anal rays — 10 to 12.  
Color — silvery; may have pinkish streak on sides. Look-alike — Salmon species.



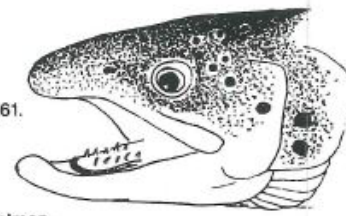
Pepper-size spots radiating along the rays on the entire tail. Additional spots may or may not adorn the upper surface of the body.



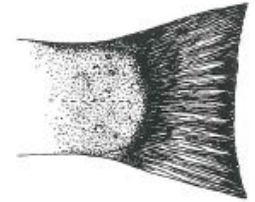
**Brown Trout:** This species is a close relative of the Atlantic salmon and was brought to North American waters as exotics. On the average, lake-run adults weigh 8 pounds. Michigan's record is 41.45 pounds.



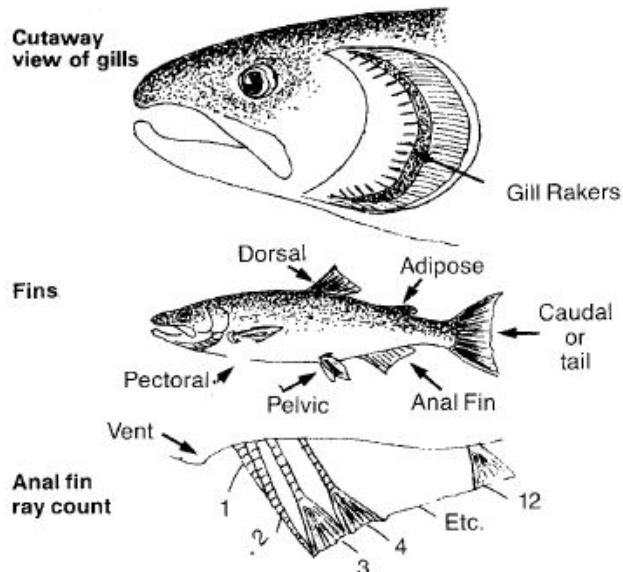
**Brown Trout**  
Anal rays — 9-10.  
Gill rakers — 14-20.  
Lateral line scales — 120-130. Scale rows around peduncle — 54-61.  
Upper lip — extends past rear of eye.  
Tongue — squarish with 5 or more strong teeth per side.  
Look-alike — Atlantic salmon.



Pectoral fins light. Tail square. Lake-run browns silvery with or without small x-shaped spots. Spots become more distinctive as fish is kept out of water and may take on a reddish hue.



## Parts of a Fish



Illustrations of full fish courtesy of Joseph R. Tomelleri.

**Lake Trout, Splake & Brook Trout:** Generally these species may be distinguished from the other trout and salmon by the whitish spotted or wormy markings on their backs and by the white leading edge of their lower fins. Separation of the three is much more difficult.



Lake Trout



Brook Trout



Splake



### Teeth on Roof of Mouth

Lake Trout

Teeth on Head and Shaft

Splake

Teeth in Single Row

Brook Trout

Teeth in Head Only

For more information on Michigan's fish species, visit [Michigan.gov/Fishing](http://Michigan.gov/Fishing)



August 2019