

DIET Coastal cutthroat trout diet varies greatly, depending on their current habitat and life stage. In small streams, they are primarily drift feeders targeting insects. In lakes and rivers, they eat insects and other small invertebrates, the eggs of other salmon and trout, and small fish. While cruising marine shorelines or eelgrass beds, they target shrimp or forage fish such as sand lance, herring, and stickleback. In large lakes they may feed on kokanee.

SIZE Coastal cutthroat trout may reach maturity at just 5-6 inches, but in some circumstances grow to be over 30 inches long. In Alaskan lakes they can reach well over 20 inches and live up to 18 years! Sea-run coastal cutthroat trout can also grow quite large, due to their rich marine-based diet.

Get to Know Your Native Trout

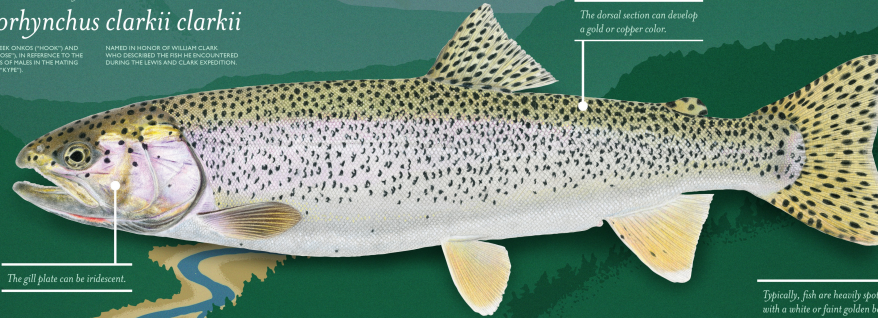
COASTAL CUTTHROAT TROUT

Common names include Coastal Cutthroat Trout, sea-run cutthroat trout, 'cutty', or 'blueback'

Oncorhynchus clarkii clarkii

FROM THE GREEK ONCHOS ('HOOK') AND RYCHOS ('TONGUE'), IN REFERENCE TO THE HOOKED JAW OF PAUL IN THE FANTASY SEASON (THE 'KITE').

NAMED IN HONOR OF WILLIAM CLARK, WHO DESCRIBED THE FISH HE ENCOUNTERED DURING THE LEWIS AND CLARK EXPLORATION.



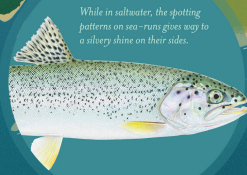
The dorsal section can develop a gold or copper color.

The gill plate can be iridescent.

Typically, fish are heavily spotted with a white or faint golden belly, and a pink hue on their sides.

COLOR Appearance can vary by location and season. The name 'cutthroat' comes from the characteristic pink to orange slash usually present under both sides of the jaw that typically extend beyond the eyes.

While in saltwater, the spotting patterns on sea-run give way to a silvery shine on their sides.



A Species in Time

Coastal cutthroat trout are one of four major lineages of cutthroat trout that split off from a common ancestor millions of years ago. Their distribution overlaps the temperate coastal rainforests of the Pacific Northwest, spanning from Prince William Sound, Alaska to Eel River, California. In coastal watersheds, cutthroat trout can adopt a sea-run form, migrating from freshwater to marine habitats. This unique trout has adapted to a dynamic environment shaped by glaciers, volcanic activity, and shifts in climate.

They're a North American Treasure!

An Adaptable Fish

Coastal cutthroat trout have adapted to varying conditions over broad expanses of space and time. These opportunistic fish can be found in coastal streams, rivers, lakes and ponds, and marine environments.

HABITAT

Coastal cutthroat trout spawn in small freshwater streams with high fidelity to their home stream. They are capable of spawning multiple times during their life. Their egg nests require cool clean water and small pea-sized gravel, free of silt to ensure oxygen can reach the developing eggs. Young fish need rivers and streams with deep pools, food-producing riffles, ample gravel and wood for cover, and streamside shade from trees and shrubs. Sea-run coastal cutthroat trout require access from headwater streams to healthy estuaries and nearshore habitats, where eelgrass, kelp beds, and other cover types provide shelter.

Perhaps the most variable species of trout in the West.



Finding Coastal Cutthroat Trout

Non-migratory forms spend their entire lives in small streams, sometimes above waterfalls. They reach maturity at a young age and small size, typically living less than five years. Not usually the target of anglers, these fish contribute to the overall health of the ecosystem and may produce offspring that may migrate to marine waters.

Migratory forms move to large rivers or lakes and, in some cases, undergo a transformation that allows them to tolerate saltwater and enter marine environments for extended periods before returning to their home stream to spawn.

Healthy populations of coastal cutthroat trout display a range of life history strategies and migratory behaviors. For populations to remain healthy they need access to healthy and connected habitats.

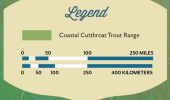
Coastal cutthroat trout are a popular sportfish. Their diverse range supports a variety of angling experiences, whether fly-fishing with an imitation caddisfly from a forested creek shore into a small pool, or wading thigh-deep in an estuary to attract a sea-run with a brightly colored imitation shrimp.

Coastal cutthroat trout currently occupy most of their historical range, but their habitat has been lost or degraded in many areas due to land use and development, roads, and fish passage barriers. Fishery impacts, impaired water quality, and barriers that bar their migration routes are some of the greatest threats coastal cutthroat trout face, and the impacts can be cumulative. Sea-run populations are particularly vulnerable to these impacts.

Climate change and its impacts on rivers and streams are an additional threat to coastal cutthroat trout.

The long-term persistence of coastal cutthroat trout depends upon continued, strategic conservation efforts and improving our understanding of this complex and fascinating animal.

Threats



Don't forget! Check with your local state fish and game agencies on current regulations. They provide tremendous resources for fishing information.



This poster is funded by the Western Native Trout Initiative, the Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission, and Trout Unlimited. For more information, please go to www.westernnative trout.org/coastalcutthroat or www.coastalcutthroattrout.org

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Map data sources: ESR, USGS, NOAA

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