

Chapter 5 – Aurora have no Spots

Like several species of trout there has been a discussion about whether the Aurora is a separate species or a subspecies (different kind of Brook). Most believe that it is a subspecies of the Brook that has evolved as a color variation. Aurora Trout don't have any side markings or spots like Brook's. They were named after the northern lights, Aurora Borealis because of their magnificent coloration. They are a rare and unique fish that takes time to find and catch.

Their history is interesting. Pollution brought them to the brink of extinction in the 1960's, and fishing was closed to Aurora's in 1983. They were native to two lakes (Whitepine and Whirlygig) in North Eastern Ontario, Canada, and were saved when Hill's Lake Fish Culture Station capture nine adults and created a breeding program. These nine fish were used to reestablish Aurora's in 12 Lakes in Ontario. They were placed back in their native Whitepine and Whirlygig Lakes and ten other Lakes. Whitepine and Whirlygig are closed to fishing and one of the other lakes is used to collect breeding fish and is also closed to fishing. The other nine lakes were open in 2006 to fishing on a limited basis. These nine lakes were open to fishing on a rotating basis with three lakes open each year.

Regulations for these fish are also interesting. The season is short and the daily limit is one fish that must be kept. There is also a possession limit of one fish. So if you catch a fish you may no longer fish for Aurora until that fish is consumed.

The fishing is really difficult for these fish and it is a challenge to catch them on a fly rod. Most of the locals use what they call gang-trolling methods, which is a gang of spinners with some type of minnow imitation for the presentation. Even with this system few fish are caught. I tubed Pallet Lake with a power tube and spend about 12 hours fishing the lake. I had three hits and one fish. Minnow flies seem to work best and all flies have to be fished deep. I used a fly that I tied for the trip that I call a rainbow smelt clouser. It is olive and white and got more hits than any other fly. I also tried several other flies, but that is the only one that got hits. Pallet Lake did not have a lot of aquatic insect activity, but I did try stonefly, damselfly, and caddis fly nymphs. There were no hits on those patterns. Fishing was slow and patience was the name of the game when fishing for Aurora.



Pallet Lake was small, but did have one reluctant Aurora.

It is a must to stay at a lodge that is somewhere close to the lake you have chosen to fish. Most times the closest place is still a 15-25 mile drive to the road to the lake which will not be a good road. Most of the time there has been no one on the road into the lake for two years. The road to Pallet was overgrown and you had to force your car through the brush that had grown in from the side of the road. The lakes are only open every third year and the roads don't see much maintenance. The area around Pallet is sandy and I had to use four-wheel drive in that area. Many of the people that came to fish Pallet did use ATV's. All of these lakes have to be fished

from a boat or tube. It is not possible to make a good presentation from the bank and the fish are always deep when the season is open. The banks around Pallet were overgrown.

Anyone that is interested in fishing for Aurora Trout does need to contact the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources because the lakes open to fishing for Aurora's are subject to change without notice. Chasing these fish is a true adventure and it will take time to find them, to get to the Aurora Lake, and it will also take a lot of time on the lake. If you persist, you will get to see a very unique trout that few have ever caught or seen.

For more information on Aurora Trout see the chapter on Aurora in the book or e-book **Trout Adventures – North America**. A list of the lakes that have Aurora as well as the regulations at the time the book was written are part of the chapter and will be available from Wilderness Adventures Press. It should be available sometime in 2012 from www.wildadvpress.com.