

Trout Site – Locations

This is the page to use if you are going to look for an area to catch one of the North American Species. The first step to catching one of these tricky trout is finding them. There are many places to fish for the different kinds of trout. Some trout exist in many areas and for those fish the areas are not all-inclusive. All of the locations are good bets to catch fish with a fly rod. I have located all of the fish and have caught all of the species. The book gives specific directions on how to reach these places, the techniques used, and what to expect on the water. **Trout Adventures North America** tells you everything you need to know. The website gives enough information for those familiar with the areas.

Albino Rainbow

This is not a separate species but is a color variant that is white. It was not on my original list of species, but was added after I fished Utah in 2008. Utah has a fairly significant annual stocking program for Albino Rainbow, and if you want to catch one that is the place to go. I know of no other state that has an Albino Rainbow management program. Through 2007 these are the places that were stocked with Albino's: Logan River, Meadow Cr. Pond, Midas Pond, Mirrow Lake, Moosehorn Lake, Ogden River, Pass Lake, Pioneer Park Pond, Riverton Pond, Rockport Reservoir, Salem Pond, and Trail Lake. I also know that Gigliotti Pond was stocked with Albino in 2008. I was going to fish Gigliotti this year but did not have time. The stockings are typically 8-19 inches, and you should check the Utah Division of Wildlife website before you target a lake for Albino.

Apache

Apache Trout are native to Arizona and while not particularly common do exist in numbers in a few places. The best place to catch for Apache is in the White Mountain Area of the Apache National Forest. They are also in several lakes on the Apache Indian Reservation adjacent to the National Forest. Special regulations and additional fees apply when fishing on the Reservation. All of the Apache locations in Arizona do get fair fishing pressure and some more than others. The places I recommend are Lee Valley Lake, Ackre Lake, and Becker Lake. All of these Lakes have special regulations and you need to check with Arizona Game and Fish for the current regulations. Ackre Lake is catch and release. There are several streams in the White Mountains that have Apache, but most have campgrounds along the streams and pressure is heavy.

Arctic Char

The key word here is arctic. To find these fish you have to go north and in most cases way north. There has been a debate for sometime about the difference between Arctic Char and Dolly Varden. Scientists have identified a slightly deeper V in the tail of the Char and a slightly narrower tail base. They exist on Kodiak Island, the Alaska Peninsula, and the Brooks Range in Alaska where the fishing is said to be best from May to July. I lived in Alaska for several years and I would not go in May. Char are also abundant in the Canadian Arctic in many lakes. The other possibility is northern Maine where they are identified as uncommon. In Maine they are Charr and have native populations in 14 lakes. There are several lakes where they seem to exist in good numbers: Black Lake, Long Pond, Floods Pond, Wadleigh Pond, Wassataquoik Lake, and Penobscot Lake. I did best in Iceland for Arctic Char. Yes, Iceland is in North America or at least 1/2 of it is on the North American tectonic plate. That was close enough for me.

Aurora

There is some debate whether Aurora Trout is a subspecies of the Brook or a species of its own. In any event it is a unique fish with very limited range. They have Brook Trout colors with no spots or side markings. They were thought to be extinct, but several were found and a fishery has

been developed in their native range in Ontario, Canada. They are threatened and endangered and fishing is allowed under very special regulations. There are nine Aurora Trout Lakes in Ontario: Borealis, Wynn, Big Club, Lake #57, Carol, Liberty, Pallet, Nayowin, and Lake #21 Tyrell. Only three are open to fishing each year, and you may only have one fish in your possession and no fish can be released. You won't be able to catch many Aurora on any trip. I did fish Pallet Lake, Ontario for Aurora in 2009 and caught one fish. Most of the locals use deep trolling methods with what they called a gang troll. That is cowbells with some type of minnow imitation. Live bait is not allowed in the Aurora lakes. Fishing for Auroras is difficult and requires putting in some time.

Brook

The first Brook Trout I caught was in one of the small streams in the higher mountains of Rocky Mountain National Park in Colorado. Brook always seem ready to take a fly, but are more aggressive when the hatch is on. I have caught more Brook out of beaver ponds in the mountain west than any other place. Large quality Brook Trout are hard to find. The largest Brook I have caught is the seven-pound fish that was caught in a spring creek in Wyoming. I have managed several large Brook from Henry's Lake, Idaho. The state that has the most extensive Brook Trout Management Plan is Maine, and that is where I would go in the U.S. for a large Brook. The eastern provinces of Canada also have many Brook waters and good fish can be taken in several locations. Rocky Mountain National Park is full of small Brookies.

Brown

Browns are like Rainbow and exist in many locations throughout the western United States. I have caught nice Browns in the Colorado, Madison, Clarks Fork, Rio Grande, Arkansas, and many other smaller streams in the west. The choice for places to fish for Brown Trout depends upon what kind of water you like to fish. The rivers that I would choose are the Madison in Montana and the Colorado somewhere around Glenwood Springs, Colorado. Both hold good Browns. The river for monster Browns in the White River below Table Rock Lake in Missouri. In October, monster Browns are caught below the dam when they move upstream. If you like to fish lakes and tube, my choice is Hebgen Lake, Montana outside of West Yellowstone. Most of the Browns listed on the statistics page were taken in Hebgen. One of the largest Brown Trout I have taken was in a tributary to Hebgen (6½ pounds). The best place I have ever fished for Brown Trout is Iceland. Brown Trout are native to this Island, and their Ocean form (Sea Trout) average the largest of any Brown's I have seen. I caught over 20 Brown's in one day of fishing the Varma River in Iceland

Bull

The Bull Trout is another special fish that inhabits western Montana and eastern Idaho. I caught them back in the 1970's and 1980's before we knew that they were special. I lived in Hamilton, Montana and fished all over the area, and found Bull Trout on the eastern side of the Bitterroot National Forest. I caught Bull Trout on the Ross Fork, West Fork, Middle Fork, and their tributaries east of Hamilton. In 2000 Bull Trout regulations became very restrictive. They became listed as endangered and most areas were closed to intentionally fishing for Bull Trout. In 2008 there were four areas open to fishing for Bull Trout: Hungry Horse Reservoir, South Fork Flathead River, Lake Koocanusa and Swan Lake. You must have a Bull Trout catch card from Montana Fish Wildlife and Parks and you must turn it in at the end of the season to get a card for the next year. Bull Trout can be harvested in some of the listed areas. Check the regulations. Bull Trout look a lot like Dolly Varden but are a little lighter. They readily take a fly and the ones I caught were not big (8-12 inches), but the streams I fished were also small. The largest Bull that I caught was a 3+ pound fish that was caught in the Bitterroot River.

Cut-bows

This is a hybrid cross between a Rainbow and Cutthroat. I know of no state that has intentionally created Cut-bows. They exist because introduced Rainbow will breed with native western Cutthroat. These fish look like washed out Rainbow and do have the traditional slash above the gill plate under the throat. When you see one, you know that it is not a Rainbow nor does it look like a Cutthroat. I have caught a couple ever year that I have fished Hebgen Lake in Montana. They are not common, but you will pick up one or two if you fish there for a few days.

Cutthroat

This is a native western trout that exist in a variety of subspecies related to specific western drainages. They are fun to catch, fight well, and tend to stay down in the water. There are 14 subspecies of Cutthroat and at least one is thought to be extinct. The Pyramid Lake Cutthroat no longer exists. The world record Cutthroat was a Pyramid Lake Cutthroat that weighted 41-pounds and was caught in 1925. I have caught seven or possibly eight of the Cutthroat subspecies: Yellowstone, Westslope, Bonneville, Rio Grande, Snake River, Blackspotted, and Colorado River. I am not sure if some of the Cutthroat I caught in Colorado were Greenback or a Colorado Cutthroat. The largest Cutthroat I have caught is a Westslope Cutthroat caught in Henry's Lake, Idaho (See Cutthroat Pictures). I enjoy catching all Cutthroat subspecies but my favorites are Westslope, Yellowstone and Snake River. If you want to catch Cutthroat I would fish the Snake River in Wyoming (this is a native population with no stocking), Yellowstone River and Lake (also a native population), and Henry's Lake, Idaho (stocking does occur in Henry's Lake). I have also caught some nice Cutthroat in the East Fork of the Bitterroot River in western Montana and high mountains of Colorado, but they are not as large as the locations mentioned.

I goal for anyone that likes to fly fish is to catch all 13 subspecies of Cutthroat. That will require traveling almost all of the Western United States, but the scenery is magnificent and the trout are some of the most beautiful and best fighting fish you will encounter. If you want to know each subspecies and where it is located check the book.



Greenback Cutthroat are one of the 13 types.

This Greenback Cutthroat is one of two native species in Colorado. This one was caught in Rocky Mountain National Park. This fish were almost eradicated and are making a comeback with protection and selected stocking. Probably the most difficult Cutthroat to catch are the Paiute Cutthroat of California. At last check none of the Paiute water is open to fishing because there is a removal program of invasive trout from their native waters. Desert Cutthroat also take an effort to find and catch. That search requires spend time fishing Nevada. Cutthroat are my favorite of all of the North American trout because of where they live and the number of different

types. They can get big and I have caught Cutthroat over eight pounds. The largest fish have been Snake River Fine Spotted Cutthroat and West Slope Cutthroat.

Dolly Varden

This Char that is native to Alaska, the western United States, and Canada. Dolly's fight well and stay down in the water they line egg and minnow flies. The best Dolly fishing I found was in Alaska. I lived in Ketchikan for several years and Dolly Varden were in almost every stream. Alaska is all about catching salmon and most of the local fishermen didn't want much to do with the Dolly Varden. The streams around Ketchikan and most of the streams in the southeastern islands have Dolly Varden. A good choice would be fishing Price of Wales Island. The fish are bigger and there is almost no pressure. A good jumping off stop would be Craig. The largest Dolly Varden I caught was about 18-inches, but I have seen them in the 4 and 5 pound range. Dollys are costal fish and you will find they in almost every costal river in Alaska. They fight well and seldom jump.



This Alaskan Dolly came from the Anchor River.

People seldom go too Alaska to catch Dolly Varden but I would suggest that any trip to the 49th state for Dolly's be combined with an effort to catch Steelhead. They will be in the same rivers and Steelhead are the tackle breakers that you hear about. Dolly Varden will be there year-round and Steelhead will be there from August - September. They are one of my favorite fish because they are always around. They do like minnow Flies but I have been on rivers where they will only take bead flies. This is particularly true during the Salmon run.

Gila

Gila Trout are one of the most rare and difficult fish (see article and pictures) to catch in North America. They are native to New Mexico and exist in only a few streams in the western part of the state. The Gila that I have caught were taken from Willow Creek just above the fork where Gilita Creek flows into the stream. The Gila streams are: Black Canyon, Iron Creek, Mogollow Creek, Willow and Gilita Creeks, Gila Fork, and Sapillo Creek. There are both native and stocked populations. There are also special regulations and seasons so you need to check with New Mexico Game and Fish. Fishing for Gila was opened in 2007 and they are rare and unique. The fish are difficult to reach and anyone that wants to catch a Gila needs to be prepared for the drive to get to them and quiet approach to small streams and spooky fish. I caught both of my Gila on #16 black stonefly nymphs. I also caught rainbow and brown in Willow Creek. The Rainbow did look like they could have been a cross between a Gila and Rainbow.

Golden

Golden Trout are native to Volcano Creek, California and now exist in many western states. They are another of the native western trout and have been introduced in many western states. Some of the strains have crossbred with Rainbow and are not pure Golden. I lived out west for many years and have never been fishing for Golden Trout, and plan a Golden fishing trip next year. The two best states for Golden populations with some size appear to be Wyoming and Montana, and that is where I will fish for them. If you are going to catch Golden be in shape. They live in the cleanest water at the highest mountain elevations of any of the trout. There are a few locations in California where you can actually drive to fishing spots, but all of the other locations are walk-in lakes and streams and most are several miles. Look for the article, pictures, and an update on locations after the trip next year. This is one of the trout I have not caught.

Golden Rainbow

The Golden Rainbow is another hybrid that was created in a fish hatchery in West Virginia. They have been successfully reproduced in other states and have become a sport fish in Pennsylvania and West Virginia and other states. Pennsylvania appears to have the most intensive Golden Rainbow management program and stocks trophy fish every year. They begin stocking early in the season with most of the trophy fish caught in April. The latest information I have indicates that less than 10,000 of the fish are stocked annually.



This is a Palomino Trout.

There is another option to catch Golden Rainbow. There are several private trout parks around the country that stock these fish. There are two parks in Missouri and other around the country that could save some travel. I caught a 4-pound golden Rainbow in Mountain Springs Trout Park that is about 20-miles south of Springfield, Missouri. Golden Rainbow are slightly different fish than the Palomino trout that are the fish stocked by Pennsylvania. Palomino are a little lighter colored yellow and are made by crossing a Golden Rainbow with a

regular Rainbow. Some of the Palomino locations in Pennsylvania: Little Mahoning Creek, Summersville Tailwater, Tygert Lake Tailwater, Jennings Randolph Lake, and Beechwood Lake. Locations do vary with stockings so it pays to check with the Pennsylvania Game and Fish. Golden Rainbow are stocked in March and April in the state, so it pays to fish early if you want to catch them!

Lake

Lake Trout are one of the most difficult species to catch on a fly rod. In 50 years of fly-fishing I have caught four. I caught one in Twin Lakes, Colorado and another in Jackson Lake, Wyoming. I can't say that I have ever fished for Lake Trout and I hope to change that next year. I hope to catch a few Lakers in future trips, and also hope to develop a deep water system with fast sink fly line from a tube. It is possible to catch Lakers early in the season on flies when the water is still very cold around the surface in most lakes where they live, and there are places in Labrador and northern Quebec where Lake Trout can be caught near the surface in some rivers and lakes throughout the fishing season. This is not a typical fly-fishing trout so it does take searching for the right time and place to catch them on a fly rod. I did catch two Lake Trout on fly in 2010- one in Alaska and one in Maine. The Alaska fish was in a river and the Maine fish was caught while I was fishing for Blueback Trout.

Mexican Golden

Mexican Golden Trout exist above 6000 feet in the mountains of western Mexico. There is debate whether there are nine different species or one species with nine subspecies. They all look similar to the Golden Trout of the United States and also look similar to each other. They inhabit

the headwaters of these rivers: Rio Yagui, Rio Mayo, Rio Fuerte, Rio Sinaloa, Rio Culiacan, Rio San Lorenzo, Rio Piaztla, Rio Del Presidio, Rio Baluarte, Rio Acaponeta, and Santo Domingo Watershed. I have not caught this species and it will be the last one to be caught. All of these areas are difficult to reach, and require going into the central mountains of Mexico.



Mexican Golden exist in western Mexico.

Mexican Golden are a little more golden than the typical California Golden. These fish have not been classified yet and may end up being a different form of Rainbow. All Golden Trout are a Rainbow color variation and these fish are no exception. These fish do not get big and small stream fishing requires stealth technique.

Rainbow

Rainbow can be found throughout North America except in some of the southeastern United States. If there is cold water anywhere around there will be Rainbow. Almost everyone that fishes for trout has a favorite spot for catching Rainbow. My first big Rainbow was a seven-pound fish caught in the White River of Missouri. That fish was the start of my interest and passion for search for trout. The largest Rainbow is an 8½-pound fish caught in Island Park Reservoir, Idaho.



My Mom at 90 years old with a Hebgen Rainbow. Tubing is a good way to fish for these acrobats.

Two of the better places to catch Rainbow are the Kenai River in Alaska and the Madison River in Montana below Hebgen Lake. The fish are big and the water is big and swift so anything you hook is a battle. My favorite location for Lake Rainbow is Hebgen Lake, Montana. It is a beautiful area, terrific to tube and the fish average 1½-2 pounds. They hit hard, fight hard and almost always take out line. There are many rivers in Montana that have great Rainbow fishing. I would call it the Rainbow state. One of the better ways to catch Rainbow is from a tube. I have spent many hours fishing a tube on the western lakes and during the trout adventure have had several trips to the eastern US tubing.

Splake

Splake are a hybrid that has been created by crossing a Brook Trout with a Lake Trout. A Speckled Trout (another name for a Brook) and a Lake Trout make a Splake. The fish were created as a sport fish in the east (Maine) and as a fish that is resistant to whirling disease in the west. This is a fish I had not caught until 2008 year. They have been heavily stocked in Utah and Maine and those are the two places that I would fish for Splake. They tend to be lake fish and seem to be good fish to catch from a tube. I have caught several Splake over the years and all of them have come out of lakes. They do exist in some areas in rivers but they do not produce

naturally and don't seem to be great river fish. They are more like the Lake Trout side of the family and seem to prefer lakes. They are beautiful fish and are worth pursuing.



Splake are one of the more beautiful hybrids.

There are several Lakes in Baxter State Park in Maine that have good populations of Splake and Utah has several waters with Splake. Causey Reservoir, Dons Lake, Fish Lake, and Forsyth Reservoir are all good bets in Utah. Both states have many more Splake stocked lakes. Maine has ten lakes that are managed as trophy Splake lakes and are good place to start any eastern Splake campaign. In the west, I would fish Utah in any one of the several lakes identified. Spake and Tiger Trout are the two best hybrids in my book. They are average fighters (Tigers are the best) but are beautiful fish and are heavily stocked in Maine and Utah.

Steelhead

The Steelhead is sea run Rainbow and grows to mammoth size. Every Steelhead I have caught was caught in Alaska, and put up a fight to remember. One of the few fish I ever had mounted was a 15-pound Steelhead from the Thorne River on the Prince of Wales Island, Alaska. So where do you go to catch Steelhead? I recommend Alaska, but there are a couple of things to remember. They are sea run fish and don't begin to show up until late July or August and stay until sometime in September. Timing is critical. The other thing is in the tips section, but I have to say it. Take twice as much backing as you think you are going to need. These are the best fighters of all of the trout and have the weight to break any test line. Be prepared and don't be afraid to start running downstream when you backing is beginning to look a little thin!

Sunapee

The Sunapee Trout is a native eastern trout that was found in Sunapee Lake, New Hampshire, Averill Pond, Vermont, Big Dan Pond, New Hampshire, and Floods Pond, Maine. Only one native population of Sunapee remains and that is in Floods Pond, Maine. There is disagreement that the Blueback Trout of Maine is also a Sunapee. They exist in northwestern Maine in the headwaters of the St. John and Penobscots Rivers. In any event, to catch this (these) fish you have to go to Maine. I did catch a Sunapee in Long Pond, Maine in 2009 (Sunapee from Floods Pond were introduced into Long Pond in the 1970's). There is no road into Long Pond and requires a ½ walk through a bog. My nephew Mark and I walked through the bog in a driving rainstorm carrying our float tubes and fished in a 10-15 mile wind for most of the day for these fish. We were rewarded with one of the beauties and in my view the rarest fish in North America.

Tiger

Tiger Trout have become a sport fish in many states with a cold-water fishery. They are a hybrid that crosses a Brown with a Brook. The result is a fantastic looking fish that fights like crazy. My first Tiger experience was this summer in Utah. I chose Utah because they have an excellent Tiger Management Program and have used the fish for many years to fight whirling disease. This disease as destroyed many of the native fish and the Sate was looking for ways to continue a trout fishery while the native stocks recovered. There are other places to catch Tigers, but Utah is my

choice. Here are some Utah Reservoirs with Tigers: Academy Mill Reservoir, Barney Lake, Benchs Pond, Birch Creek Reservoir, Blue Lake, Causey Reservoir, Crouse Reservoir, Dons Lake, and Forsyth Reservoir. There are many more lakes with Tiger Trout in the state so check with the Utah Division of Wildlife.



Tiger Trout are great fighters!

Other trout

There are other trout that may exist in the United States. Ohrid Trout were introduced in the United States in the 1960's from what was then Yugoslavia. They were stocked in Montana, Wyoming, Colorado, Minnesota, and Tennessee. It appears that all of these stocking failed except in Tennessee. There may be a few left in Tennessee.

Another hybrid called Brake Trout was stocked in Utah until 1997. This is a cross between a Brown trout and Lake trout and was very resistant to whirling disease but did not survive well. It is possible that a few of these fish remain. The best possibilities would be Mill Meadow Reservoir, and Porcupine Reservoir.

Redband Trout are considered a subspecies of the Rainbow. There are actually two subspecies of Redband. The Columbia River Redband is found in Montana, Washington, and Idaho and the Great Basin Redband is found in southeastern Oregon, and parts of California and Nevada. Redband Trout have bigger spots than Rainbow and parr (side splotches) marks (like juvenile rainbow) that remain throughout their lives. Generally, they do not get very large (12-inches)

I have not included them as a separate species in the North American quest to catch all of the species, but they do look slightly different than the typical rainbow. There is also another subspecies of Rainbow that is beginning to show up. Several years ago a hatchery had an abnormal hatch and created several Blue Rainbow. The fish were a beautiful shad of light blue on the side and silver toward the bottom of the body. These fish did survive and were able to reproduce. They are not as strong as the regular and had only a 75% survival rate compared to the normal fish. They also do not grow as the normal ones and were smaller for the same age. Several hatcheries in the United States now have Blue Rainbow and they are beginning to make their way into some of the streams and lakes around the country. If they show up consistently I will add them to the site. So when you look for hybrid Rainbow there are Golden Rainbow, Palomino, Albino, and Blue Rainbow. There are several places in France and England that have Blue Rainbow available to catch. I have also caught Golden Rainbow in Japan so they are around the world.

There is another fish that is not a hybrid but is more of a color variation of a Rainbow. I would call Golden Trout and Mexican Golden a Rainbow color variation that has evolved over the centuries because of an isolated habitat. Redband are a similar trout and look like immature

Rainbow. They have a characteristic red band down the lateral line that gives them their name. They are fun to catch but may not jump as much as a typical Rainbow. That is open for debate.



Redband are a Rainbow subspecies native to the West.

I caught Redband in Nevada in 2011 in a river that only had Redband. I looked a long time to find such a place, but it does exist. They are a pretty fish with parr marks that last all of their lives. They are a Rainbow subspecies that live in four different regions of the western United States. All are somewhat difficult to reach but they are a unique fish and are worth the effort. It is possible to catch Bull Trout and Redband from the same area.

To learn more about Redband and all of the other trout in North America check out the book or e-book **Trout Adventures North America** that was published in 2013 by Wilderness Adventures Press. Click on the book icon on the main page of the site. If you want a fishing adventure, go catch all of the trout in North America! It may take a lifetime but it is an adventure all along the way. Include all of the subspecies and it will add several more years to the challenge. All of the information is on the site and in the book so get started!