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Arctic Grayling

Scientific Name: *Thymallus Arcticus*
Taxonomy: Fish
Range: Yukon, Northwest Territories, Nunavut, British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba
Last COSEWIC Assessment: No status
SARA Status: No status
Government of Alberta Status: Sensitive, Species of Special Concern

Fact Sheet

Information adapted from:

Alberta Environment and Sustainable Resource Development website (www.esrd.alberta.ca/fish-wildlife/wild-species/fish/salmon-trout-related/arctic-grayling/arctic-grayling.aspx)
 Government of Alberta, Wildlife Status Report No. 57 (www.esrd.alberta.ca/fish-wildlife/species-at-risk/species-at-risk-publications-web-resources/fish/documents/SAR-StatusArcticGraylingAlberta-Mar2005.pdf)

Appearance

The Arctic Grayling can be identified by their colourful and very large dorsal fin, which is much larger than that of any other cold-water fish. The top of the dorsal fin is rounded.

They have large scales with brown or black spots on the body behind the head.

Average body length ranges from 30-40 cm and can measure up to 55 cm.

Average weight ranges from 300 – 800 grams and can measure up to 1.3 kg. Larger Arctic Grayling can be found in other ranges.

Spawning occurs from May to June. Grayling migrate from lakes and larger rivers to smaller streams to spawn.

Boreal Distribution

The Arctic Grayling are native to North America, and are found primarily in the Athabasca, Hay and Peace River drainage systems of Alberta.

A small population of this fish can be found in the Belly River in southwestern Alberta and in mountain ponds that have been stocked.

Threats

Populations of this fish have decreased over the past few decades due to:

- Increased accessibility by humans to remaining habitat, resulting in increased harvest by recreational fisherman.
- Blocked migration routes, altered stream flow, and increased sedimentation resulting from increased resource landuse.
- Warming water temperatures attributed to climate change and landscape alterations.



Image by: Karl Geist

Habitat

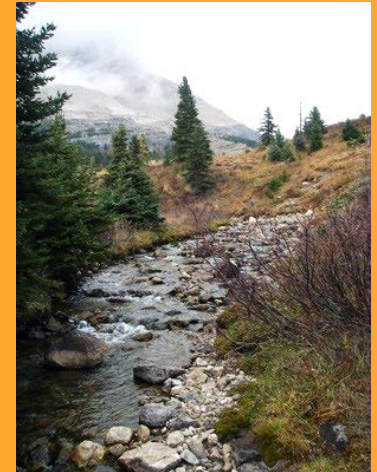


Photo: www.tucanada.org

The Arctic Grayling are cold water fish that are primarily found in boreal and foothill rivers and streams.

Generally, in foothills streams, grayling occur in flowing water of moderate gradient that usually remains cool and clear. In boreal areas, many populations occur in clear, tannin-stained (brown) rivers that drain northern muskegs. A few populations in northern Alberta occur naturally in small clear lakes.

They are sensitive to sediment loads in their habitat.