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Native Fish

Whirling disease is a parasitic infection of fish caused by a microscopic protozoan that destroys the cartilage of juvenile trout. Seriously infected fish have a reduced ability to feed or escape from predators and mortality is high. See Chapter 8 for details.

Arctic Grayling

Thymallus arcticus montanus

- Used to share similar habitat with west-slope cutthroat trout and whitefish (with which it is sometimes confused).
- Displaced by non-native species.
- Native, river-dwelling form (fluvial) extinct in the park.
- Because of stocking in the 1920s, grayling live in Grebe, Wolf, and Cascade lakes.
- In these lakes, grayling spawn in June.
- Like trout, grayling eat mostly insects.

Mountain Whitefish

Prosopium williamsoni

- Slender silver fish, sometimes confused with grayling.
- Lives in Yellowstone's rivers and streams.
- Requires deep pools, clear and clean water, and is very sensitive to pollution.
- Unlike other native fish, the whitefish spawns in the fall.

Native Nongame Fish

Suckers: longnose, mountain, and Utah

- Bottom-dwelling fish that use ridges on their jaws to scrape aquatic flora and fauna from rocks.
- Eaten by birds, bears, otters, and large cutthroat trout.
- Habitat distinguishes species:

Mountain sucker *Catostomus platyrhynchus*: cold, fast, rocky streams and some lakes.

Longnose sucker *C. catostomus*: Yellowstone River drainage below the Grand Canyon; Yellowstone Lake and its surrounding waters (introduced). Equally at home in warm and cold waters, streams and lakes, clear and turbid waters.

Utah sucker *C. ardens*: Snake River drainage.

Mottled sculpin *Cottus bairdi*

- Lives in shallow, cold water throughout Yellowstone except in the Yellowstone River above Lower Falls and in Yellowstone Lake.
- Eats small insects, some fish and plants.
- Eaten by trout.

Management

Current efforts on behalf of the grayling include habitat surveys in the upper reaches of Grayling Creek to determine if a restoration project is possible in that location. Yellowstone National Park, Gallatin National Forest, and Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks are working together on this project.

- Generally feeds along the bottom, eating aquatic insect larvae.
- Compete with trout for the same food.
- The whitefish has persisted in its native waters, unlike grayling.

Minnows

- Small fish living in a variety of habitats and eating a variety of foods.
- All four species eaten by trout.

Utah chub *Gila atratria*: Largest of the minnows (12 inches); native to Snake River drainage; seems to prefer slow, warm waters with abundant aquatic vegetation.

Longnose dace *Rhinichthys cataractae*: Most often found behind rocks and in eddies of cold, clear waters of the Yellowstone and Snake river drainages.

Redside shiner *Richardsonius balteatus*: Minnow of lakes; native to the Snake River drainage; has been introduced to Yellowstone Lake, where it might compete with native trout because its diet is similar to that of young trout.

Speckled dace *Rhinichthys osculus*: Lives in the Snake River drainage.