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Brook Trout vs. Brown Trout: A Simple Guide

Updated on Aug 21, 2019 | 3 minute read | Written by Albert

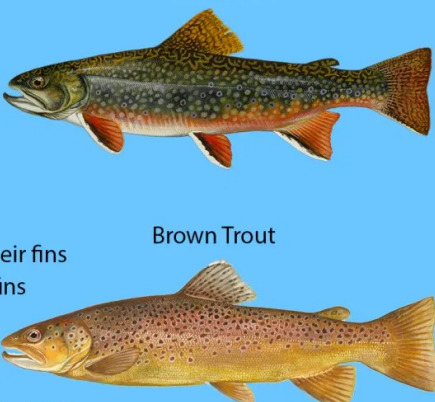
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Who doesn't love Trout fishing? Wading a shallow stream or casting into a remote lake, with half a dozen potential game fish waiting to take your line. It's some of the best angling you could ask for! However, it can sometimes be confusing – you've caught a Trout, sure, but which Trout? With that in mind, here's a quick run-down of two common species: Brook Trout (<https://fishingbooker.com/fish/brook-trout>) and Brown Trout (<https://fishingbooker.com/fish/brown-trout>).

Brook Trout vs. Brown Trout Identification

Brown Trout vs. Brook Trout Identification

- Spots**
Lighter than the body on Brook Trout
Darker than the body on Brown Trout
- Pattern on Back**
Brook Trout have a wormlike pattern
Brown Trout have no distinct pattern
- Lower Fins**
Brook Trout have a white edging on their fins
Brown Trout have no edging on their fins
- Tail**
Brook Trout have spots on their tail
Brown Trout have few or no spots on their tail



At first glance, Brown and Brook Trout look pretty similar. They're the same shape, and they each have spots on their sides. What's more, both fish come in a variety of colors. Don't worry, there are a few easy ways to tell the two species apart.

The first thing you should look at is their spots. Are they lighter than the rest of their body, or darker? If their spots are lighter, it's probably a Brook Trout. If not, chances are it's a Brown Trout. While you're looking, check out the halos around the spots. These will have a bluish tint on Brookies, but will be plain whitish on Browns.

Another clear sign of which fish you've caught is its markings. Brook Trout have a distinctive wormlike pattern on their backs. They also have white edging along their lower fins, as well as the bottom of their tail. Brown Trout don't have any of these things.

Still can't tell what you're holding? Take a look at the tail. Brook Trout have splotches and spots all over their tails. Brown Trout tails are usually plain, with a few spots on the top half at most.

Brook Trout vs. Brown Trout Habitat

You now know how to tell Brook and Brown Trout apart. But where should you go to catch them? Both species are incredibly adaptable in their own ways, but they do have their preferred hangouts. Knowing these is the key to landing a monster.

Brook Trout Habitat



Despite their name, Brook Trout don't just live in small streams. These versatile fish are at home in anything from tiny creeks and beaver ponds to large lakes and rivers. They can also survive in brackish waters, and even in the ocean. In short, they can show up just about everywhere.

The one thing that Brook Trout are picky about is current. They hunt by lying in wait for food to float their way. Because of this, you'll rarely find them in sluggish, slow-moving water. At the same time, if the current is too fast, they need to expend too much energy to hold steady in the water. They're the Goldilocks of the Trout family: Not too fast. Not too slow. Just right.

Brown Trout Habitat



Brown Trout are more particular when it comes to finding a home. They like clear rivers and lakes with plenty of cover. They're quite flexible about the temperature, but tend to be more common in colder waters, especially in rivers and streams.

Despite their love of clear water (or perhaps because of it), Brown Trout spend most of their time holding in cover. They hide in debris and deep pools, or among rocks and overhanging vegetation. They may seem shy, but they'll still put up the fight of a life once they take your bait.

Brook Trout and Brown Trout may seem similar at first, but these are two very distinct creatures. From the way they look to the waters they live in, there are a lot of differences between them. The one thing they do have in common is that they're both true game fish, and a ton of fun to catch. So what are you waiting for, get out there and hook one!

How do you identify Brook Trout vs. Brown Trout? Have you caught them both in the past? Where did you do it? Let us know in the comments below.

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Comments (5)

Bryan

September 24, 2019

The picture you have at the top of the part about "brook trout habitat" you actually have a picture of a tiger trout instead of a brook trout.

Reply



Albert

Replied on September 25, 2019

Hi Bryan,

What makes you say that?

To my knowledge, Tiger Trout have wormlike marking all across their body, instead of the light spots on dark green that the fish in this photo has.

It could potentially be a Splake, though, now that I look at it again.

What does everyone else think?

Reply

Jack

Replied on October 19, 2019

That's a Brook Trout, and a very nice one at that.

The worm pattern on tiger trout covers more of the body of the fish.

Reply

Richard

May 10, 2020

I fish a certain little lake that's easily a favorite here in the beautiful Utah Mountains at least two, or three times a year and it's full of Tiger Trout – those being the majority of what we catch. As a result, I can confidently say that the fish in the referred pic above, is absolutely a Brookie – NO DOUBT about it! Thanks for the continued valuable info you share with all of us "FLY THROWERS"

Reply



Albert

Replied on May 11, 2020

Hi Richard,

Thanks for getting in touch, and for closing the case on the photo. It's great to hear that you enjoyed the article.

Tight lines!

Reply

Leave a comment

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