

FISH
of
CRATER LAKE NATIONAL PARK

A. In Crater Lake:

Records show that Crater Lake has been stocked with German brown trout, cutthroat trout, steelhead trout, rainbow trout, and silver salmon. Prior to the first recorded planting in 1888, the lake is believed to have been void of fish life.

The last recorded stockings were of silver salmon in 1937 and rainbow in 1941. The practice was discontinued when creel censuses began to show naturally reproducing populations of these two species.

Subsequent investigation proved that the natural population of silver salmon was actually kokanee salmon. Since no kokanee were intentionally introduced, it is believed that one of the silver salmon plantings had actually consisted of kokanee fingerlings.

Of these six species introduced, two remain today:

1. Kokanee salmon (Oncorhynchus nerka). This dwarf, landlocked form of the sockeye salmon is the most abundant and apparently best adapted species in the lake. The fish average from 9 to 18 inches in length.

2. Rainbow trout (Salmo gairdneri). This fish is less abundant than the kokanee but, due to its larger size, from 12 to 24 inches, it is a favorite of the sport angler on Crater Lake.

B. Park streams:

Although only two species of trout, brook and rainbow, have been planted in the streams of Crater Lake National Park according to the stocking records, four forms have been collected and identified.

1. Brook trout (Salvelinus fontinalis), the most abundant and apparently the most firmly established. This trout has been collected or observed in almost every stream in the Park.

2. Dolly Varden trout (Salvelinus malma) appears to be well distributed in the lower Sun Creek drainage. It is assumed that this trout is the only native game species within the Park. They may have migrated up from the Wood River of the Klamath Watershed. None of them have been planted within the Park.

3. Rainbow trout (Salmo gairdneri). Although large numbers of these fish have been planted in the Park, it appears that their numbers are few and scattered in the park streams. They have been collected from Munson, Annie, Bybee, Sun, and Castle Creeks.

4. Brown trout (Salmo trutta). One specimen was collected in Sand Creek above the falls, which appear to form an effective barrier to upstream migration. It is probable that this fish is a survival of an unrecorded or unauthorized planting in that stream.