

Arctic Grayling Fishing

The Colorado division of wildlife has always made an effort to offer fishermen a wide variety of angling opportunity when it comes to game fish and there's one in particular that is rather extraordinary.

For most Colorado fishermen the Arctic Grayling is more a fish of northern Canada and Alaska, but small populations can be found right here. One of the most accessible places to find them is at Joe Wright reservoir just off highway 14 near Cameron pass west of Fort Collins in the never summer mountain range.

Grayling are related to trout, in other words they are a salmonid. They are unique because of their almost iridescent-like skin and the large sail-like fin that extends along their body.

Male Grayling have bigger fins than females, and there's actually an interesting reason for this. Male grayling will actually wrap the fin over their mate when the fish spawn. The idea being to fertilize as many eggs as possible since grayling don't produce the quantities of eggs or milt that other fish do.

Grayling were first stocked in Colorado in the late 1890s, but it wasn't until the mid-1960s that the division had success with a self sustaining population.

Grayling pretty much feed on small insects. In fact they have an unusual eye in which they can see minute insects from a good distance, but they need reading glasses when they get close. Grayling will often make repeated tries at a meal before actually capturing it.

Colorado grayling are never very big. The state record is a one-pound-ten-ounce fish that went seventeen inches. Other grayling waters include Barnes Meadow Reservoir, Chambers Lake, Lower Big Creek, and a number of high back country lakes.