

Fish Identification—Nonnative

Rainbow Trout—RT



Widely distributed due to historic stocking. Not present in Yellowstone Lake, Yellowstone River above the Upper Falls, or the Snake River.



numerous spots on head

often white on edge of fins

small scales

Hybridized (genetically impure) cutthroat trout

In waters where rainbow trout have been introduced, there has been a serious degradation of the cutthroat trout population through interbreeding of the two species. Cutthroat/rainbow trout hybrids exist throughout the Bechler, Falls, Gallatin, Gardner, and Lamar rivers, and the Yellowstone River below the Upper Falls.

Cutthroat/rainbow trout hybrids have color and markings consistent with both species, making identification

difficult. However, rainbows and hybrids will have white tips on the anal and paired pelvic fins.

Trout that have any indication of a red/orange jaw slash are fully protected by catch-and-release regulations—except in the Lamar River drainage and the Yellowstone River and northern tributaries between Lower Falls and Knowles Falls.

If you don't know, let it go.



white tips on fins



red jaw slash