

A
Coaster
Brook
Trout's
Tale...

Fishery biologists are trying to save the once abundant, native coaster brook trout in the few places where it has survived overfishing and loss of spawning areas dating from the 1800s.

You can help protect and bring this rare and beautiful fish back into the Great Lakes ecosystem.

What is a coaster brook trout?

Coasters are brook trout that live at least some of their life in the Great Lakes or in the ocean along the Atlantic coast of North America. In Lake Superior they usually swim up tributary streams to spawn in late fall, but may also spawn along the lake shore. Coasters differ from brook trout that live in streams year-round in size (mature adults are usually over 16 inches long and may weigh several pounds) and color (more silvery), and have longer life spans.



Named after their fondness for Lake Superior's rocky shore lines, coasters were the darlings of 19th century anglers from America and Europe. Diaries from the period joyfully record the fish's brilliant colors, trophy size, gourmet taste and eagerness to rise to the bait.

Sadly, predictions in the late 1800s that this bonanza couldn't last, came true. The unregulated coaster brook trout fishery was easily overfished and human activity damaged watersheds. For example, spawning beds were buried under sand churned up as rafts of freshly cut timber headed downstream to sawmills. Trout population numbers began a downward spiral. By the 1940s, the number of wild coaster populations was reduced to a mere half-dozen.

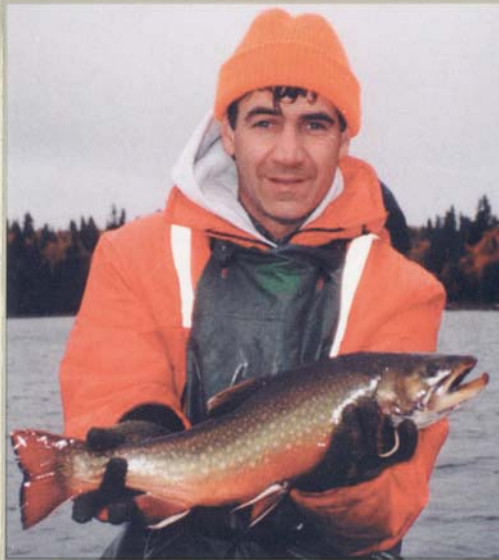
What can we do?

Bringing coaster brook trout back to its native waters, from western Lake Superior to the shores of northern Lake Huron, is a complex task. Federal, tribal, state and private partners in the United States and Canada are gathering information from the few remaining sites of wild populations. To bring back the "little salmon of the springs" three things are clearly needed:

- ~protection of remaining stocks
- ~rehabilitation of spring-fed areas of streams
- ~redesign or removal of dams blocking access to those streams.

Working together, we can keep the words of Henry David Thoreau from coming true . . .

"But one is inclined to use the past tense in writing of the wild brook trout. Constitutionally incompatible with the advance of civilization, this exquisite fish is dying. Where man has dried up his springs by deforestation, polluted his waterways, straightened streams into ditches and denuded them of their natural cover, the wild brook trout has vanished."



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We need your help!

No one knows streams better than the anglers who fish them. If you have any information about coaster brook trout, or would like to learn more about them, please contact:

LAKE SUPERIOR-WIDE:

Trout Unlimited,
703/284-9410, Arlington, Virginia
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service,
715/682-6185 ext. 208, Ashland, Wisconsin

CANADIAN WATERS:

Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources,
705/253-8288, Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario
807/475-1231, Thunder Bay, Ontario

IN MICHIGAN:

Bay Mills Indian Community
906/248-3241, Brimley
Department of Natural Resources
906/249-1611, Marquette
Isle Royale National Park
906/487-9080, Houghton
Keweenaw Bay Indian Community
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IN MINNESOTA:

Department of Natural Resources
218/723-4680, Duluth
Fond du Lac Band of Lake Superior Chippewa
218/879-3919, Cloquet
Grand Portage Band of Chippewa
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IN WISCONSIN:

Bad River Band of Lake Superior Chippewa
715/682-7123, Odanah
Department of Natural Resources
715/392-7988, Superior
Red Cliff Band of Chippewa
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