

# Fishes of the Jordan River

compiled by Dan Potts, local naturalist/ichthyologist, revised 2011

## TROUTS, SALMONS (SALMONIDAE)

### natives

<b>Bonneville cutthroat trout</b>	<i>Onchorhynchus clarki</i>	rare
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### introduced exotics

<b>Brown trout</b>	<i>Salmo trutta</i>	rare
<b>Rainbow trout</b>	<i>Onchorhynchus mykiss</i>	locally common, stocked annually

NOTE: All of the trouts are found primarily in and near tributary streams to the Jordan, except rainbows that are found in areas where they are stocked as sport fish by the State of Utah Division of Wildlife Resources.

## MINNOWS (CYPRINIDAE)

### natives

<b>Redside shiner</b>	<i>Richardsonius balteatus</i>	locally common
<b>Speckled dace</b>	<i>Rhinichthys osculus</i>	locally common
<b>Utah chub</b>	<i>Gila atraria</i>	uncommon

### introduced exotics

<b>Common carp</b>	<i>Cyprinus carpio</i>	common, pervasive
<b>Goldfish</b>	<i>Carassius auratus</i>	rare
<b>Fathead minnow</b>	<i>Pimephales promelas</i>	rare
<b>Golden shiner</b>	<i>Notemigonus crysoleucus</i>	rare

NOTE: Common carp are so common that they account for the vast majority of the fish by weight throughout the Jordan River. Fathead minnow and golden shiner were introduced into Utah Lake as a prey species and have found their way downstream in very limited numbers. Goldfish were probably introduced as pets, but have persisted over the years. The three remaining natives are less common and mostly found in upstream reaches, especially below the Narrows.

## SUCKERS (CATOSTOMIDAE)

### natives

<b>Utah sucker</b>	<i>Catostomus ardens</i>	common
<b>Mountain sucker</b>	<i>Catostomus platyrhynchus</i>	uncommon
<b>June sucker</b>	<i>Chasmistes liorus</i>	rare

NOTE: Utah sucker are the second most abundant fish species by weight in the Jordan River, and are found throughout. Mountain sucker are much less numerous and much smaller. June sucker is a "lake" species of Utah Lake, and are currently listed as an endangered species by the Federal Government.

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**CATFISHES (ICTALURIDAE)**

introduced exotics

<b>Black bullhead</b>	<i>Ameiurus melas</i>	common
<b>Channel catfish</b>	<i>Ictalurus punctatus</i>	common, occasionally stocked

NOTE: Both species are more abundant in the upstream reaches above the Narrows.

**LIVEBEARERS (POECILIIDAE)**

introduced exotics

<b>Mosquitofish</b>	<i>Gambusia affinis</i>	common
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NOTE: Mosquitofish are stocked by county mosquito abatement departments to control mosquitos, and are very common in shallow backwater areas.

**TEMPERATE BASSES (PERCICHTHYIDAE)**

introduced exotics

<b>White bass</b>	<i>Morone chrysops</i>	common
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NOTE: White bass can be found throughout the river, but are much more common in upstream areas, especially from May till June when they make a spawning run.

**SUNFISHES (CENTRARCHIDAE)**

introduced exotic

<b>Green sunfish</b>	<i>Lepomis cyanellus</i>	common
<b>Bluegill</b>	<i>Lepomis macrochirus</i>	uncommon
<b>Black crappie</b>	<i>Pomoxis nigromaculatus</i>	uncommon
<b>Largemouth bass</b>	<i>Micropterus salmoides</i>	uncommon

NOTE: Most of these species are primarily found in calm, backwater areas throughout the river. Green sunfish are the most widespread, and are found in shallow areas with cover.

**PERCHES (PERCIDAE)**

introduced exotic

<b>Yellow perch</b>	<i>Perca flavescens</i>	uncommon
<b>Walleye</b>	<i>Stizostedion vitreum</i>	uncommon

NOTE: Yellow perch can be found throughout the river, but are not normally a river species. Walleye do well in rivers and can be found throughout the Jordan, but are more numerous upstream, especially during their spring spawning run in April.

**Ecology**

There are a total of only seven native species found in the river, whereas there are 16 introduced exotics on this list. The most common and pervasive species in the river is the common carp. Introduced into the area in the late 1800s carp have had a rather deleterious effect on the river's ecology due to its feeding and spawning habits which contribute to the turbidity of

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the water. Other introduced exotics such as both catfish species and white bass have also significant impacts on the river's ecology primarily through their competition and predation with and on other animals. The only significant native species remaining in the river is the Utah sucker that appears to be doing well. The Utah Division of Wildlife Resources have historically stocked rainbow trout and channel catfish in the river to support its sport fishing opportunities, however, recent findings of various pollutants common to highly urbanized areas like the Salt Lake Valley suggest that it may not be safe to eat any fish from the river, especially in downstream areas.

Other species that may be present, but very rare, and thus not included in the list above include other native species: leatherside chub, longnose dace, mountain whitefish, and mottled sculpin; and other introduced exotics: white sucker, brook trout, and smallmouth bass.

**References:**

Fishes of Utah, W. F. Sigler and J. W. Sigler, Univ. of Utah Press, 1996, 375 pp.

The Fish Fauna of Utah Lake, S. Ross Hatton, Master's Thesis, BYU, 1932, 64 pp.