

Arctic Charr

Salvelinus alpinus

Fish · Here all year · spawns Oct–Dec



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A slender salmonid with pale cream or pink spots on a dark olive back — the reverse of a trout's dark spotting — a white leading edge to the lower fins, and, in spawning males, a blazing orange-red belly. Arctic charr live in a small number of deep, cold, clean lochs in the region, keeping to the coldest deep water for most of the year.

BEHAVIOUR

British charr are landlocked relics: at the end of the last ice age sea-run charr were cut off in deep lochs and have been isolated ever since, so populations in different lochs have diverged and are treated as distinct and irreplaceable. They feed on plankton and invertebrates in cold deep water, moving into the shallows to spawn over gravel in late autumn. They are extremely sensitive to warming and nutrient enrichment.

WHEN TO SEE IT

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QUICK FACTS

FAMILY	Salmon and trout (Salmonidae)
SIZE	Typically 20–35 cm in British lochs
UK STATUS	A conservation priority; isolated loch populations are irreplaceable

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