

Our Wildlife Heritage

HISTORIC NAMES

Have you ever thought about how plants and animals get their names? Scientists have special names for wildlife that are often in Latin and Greek languages. Many of these names are long and hard to spell, but they often have a special meaning. Sometimes this special meaning describes what animals look like. Other times it honors someone who was important in history. For example, *Oncorhynchus clarki* is the scientific name of the cutthroat trout. The first name, *Oncorhynchus*, means “hook-shaped nose,” and the second word, *clarki*, refers to a famous explorer named William Clark. Early in the 1800s, Lewis and Clark explored the mountains and rivers of western North America where cutthroat trout live. That is why the cutthroat trout was named after Clark. A river in northwest Wyoming also bears his name, the Clarks Fork.

Can you find it on the Wyoming map? What other plants and animals in Wyoming are named after history? Can you find places named after historical figures?

YELLOWSTONE CUTTHROAT



SNAKE RIVER CUTTHROAT



BONNEVILLE CUTTHROAT



COLORADO RIVER CUTTHROAT



Illustrations by Michelle LaGory

WILLIAM CLARK



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