



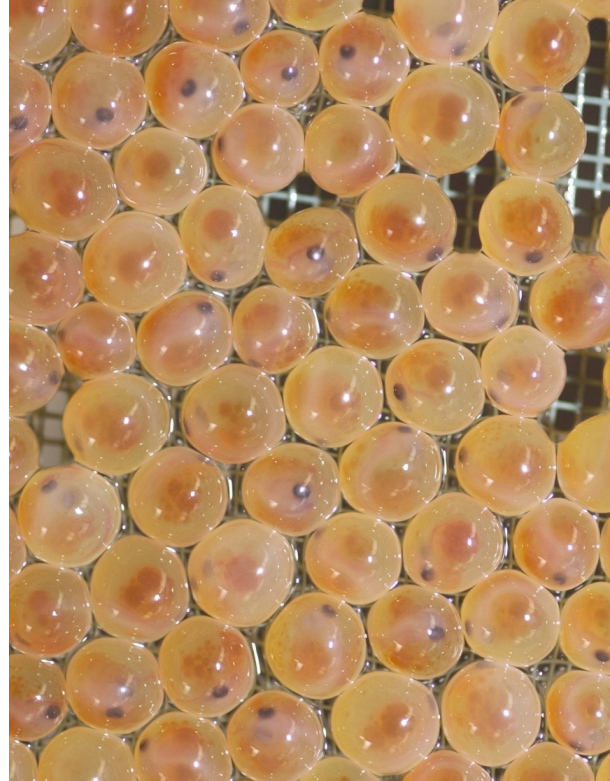
Spawning Season

In this hatchery, rainbow and cutthroat trout spawn (lay eggs) in the fall and winter. The hatchery staff starts preparing for spawning season in August by separating the male from the female fish. Spawning begins in September: Eggs are squeezed from the females, then milt (sperm) is squeezed from the males. Once eggs have been fertilized, they are taken to the hatchery building for processing.



Egg Processing

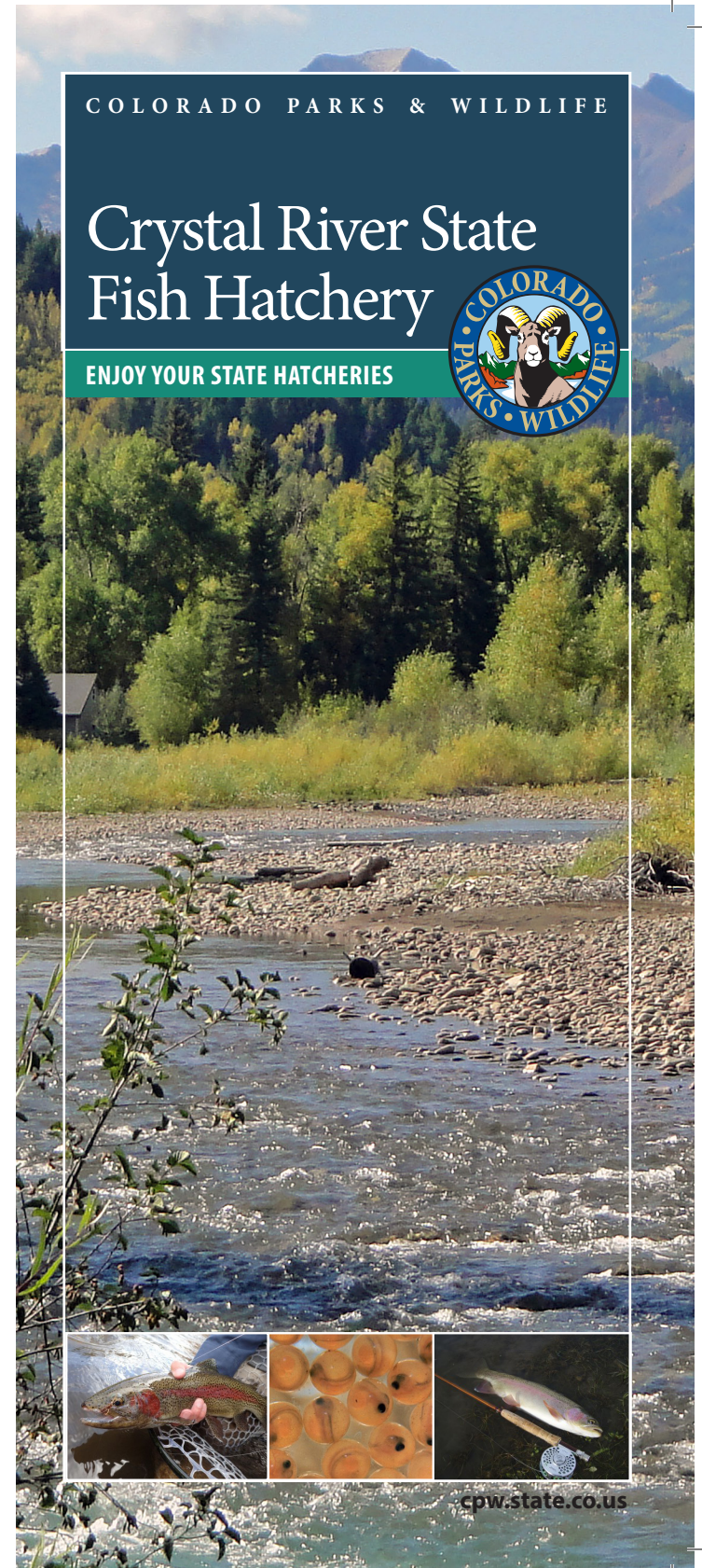
The fertilized eggs are placed into incubator trays or jars where clean well water flows through. The flow is set so it provides enough oxygen for development. After about 19 days, the eggs reach the “eyed stage” when dark spots (the eyes) appear. At this point the eggs are stronger, and can be sorted, carefully packaged and shipped in coolers with ice to other hatcheries.



Crystal River State Fish Hatchery

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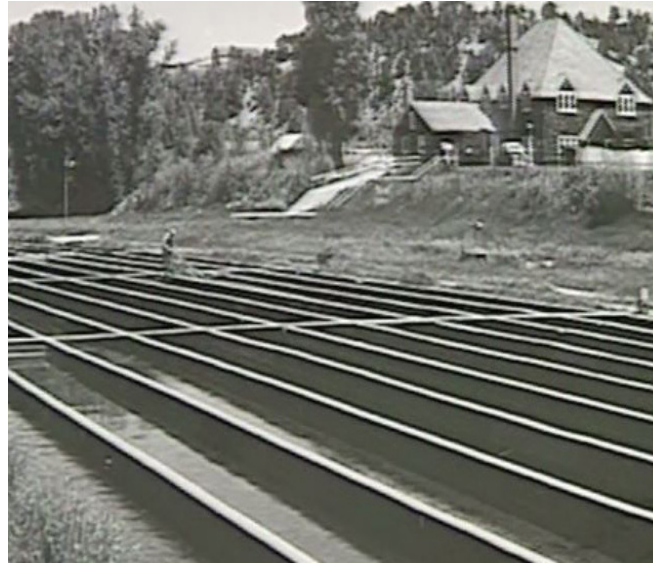
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The Crystal River Hatchery

Built in 1941, the Crystal River Hatchery is primarily a brood fish or egg production unit recognized for its high quality eggs and the unique time of year (fall/winter) when trout eggs are spawned and incubated. Each year the hatchery ships about 10 million live trout eggs to other hatcheries in Colorado. Some eggs are traded with other states to maintain healthy genetic diversity. Crystal River Hatchery also raises fish to replenish its brood-stock (fish used to produce and fertilize eggs) and to support a statewide stocking program. Anglers certainly welcome a Crystal River fish truck on release days!



Why Does Colorado Need a Hatchery System?

For centuries, Colorado's fish-filled waters provided food for families, jobs for workers and leisure activities for young and old. By the late 1800s, unregulated fishing had greatly diminished wild fish populations. Concerned sportsmen and community leaders recognized Colorado's waters could not sustain unrestricted fishing and lobbied for conservation.

In 1861, the Territorial Assembly passed the first fishing regulation, and in 1877, Colorado appointed a fish commissioner to develop a hatchery system to bolster wild populations.

CPW operates 19 hatcheries that breed, hatch, rear and stock over 90 million fish per year. Many of the fish produced are to enhance angling opportunities, while others serve a critical role in native species recovery efforts. Colorado fish hatcheries support our angling pastime, which annually contributes 1.9 billion dollars to our state's economy!