

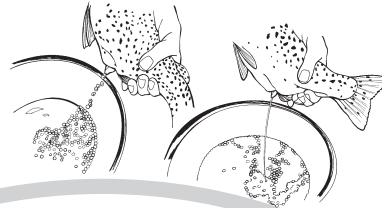
# Rainbow Trout Life Cycle



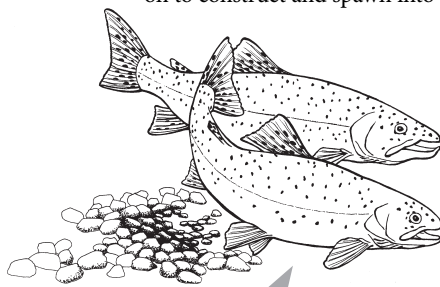
In late winter through spring\*, rainbow trout seek out places to **spawn**—reproduce. They look for gravel beds in streams with cold, well-oxygenated water. The female trout prepares a depression in the gravel using her tail fin. This depression is called a **redd**. As soon as the female lays eggs in the redd, the male, who hovers nearby, releases a cloud of sperm, or **milt**, and the eggs are fertilized. The female then uses her tail fin to sweep the gravel back over the eggs and then the pair moves on to construct and spawn into other redds. ▼

## Nature vs. *Hatcheries*

*In hatcheries, trout are anesthetized so that the eggs and sperm can be collected gently.*



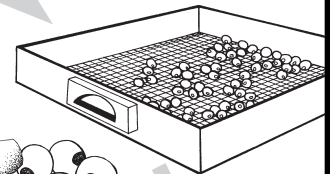
*In hatcheries, the fertilized eggs are placed in incubator trays. Cold, well-oxygenated water constantly flows over the eggs.*



**1**

The time it takes the eggs to develop and hatch varies according to the temperature—at lower temperatures it takes longer. Newly hatched trout have yolk sacs protruding from their undersides and are called **sac fry** or **alevin**. The sac fry remain under the gravel of the redd as they use up the nutrients stored in the yolk sac. ▶

**2**



*Hatcheries may stock fingerling (subcatchable fish) or continue to feed the fish in raceways until they reach catchable size (10 inches or more).*



**5**

As the parr fry grow larger, they move into the stronger current of the stream. They eat insects and small animals that live in, or fall into, the stream. Depending on water temperature and food supply, fry eventually reach fingerling size (about 3 inches until 9 inches).

When the nutrients are gone, the yolk sac disappears. Now the young fish are just called **fry**. The fry emerge from the gravel and are sometimes called “swim-ups.” The fry move to shallow water where they have some protection from predators. ▼

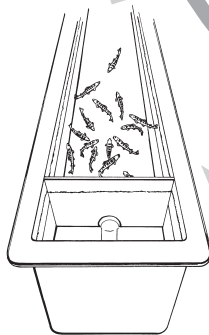
**3**



*In hatcheries, these small fry are also called “swim-ups” even though the newly hatched fish are smaller in diameter than the eggs they hatched from. The little fish fall through the screening in the hatching or incubator trays into small troughs. Still, no one calls them “fall-downs!”*

**4**

After several weeks, dark vertical marks—**parr marks**—appear along the side of the young trout and the fry are now called **parr**. The trout lose these marks as they grow.



### *Keeping Colorado Wild*

The Colorado Division of Wildlife is the state agency responsible for protecting and managing wildlife and its habitat, as well as providing wildlife-related recreation. The Division is funded by hunting and fishing license fees, federal grants, and Colorado Lottery proceeds through Great Outdoors Colorado. 8/2008

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