



Rainbow Trout Fact Sheet



Image courtesy of USBR

Basic Biology

Latin name: *Oncorhynchus mykiss*

Availability: The native range of wild trout is western North America though rainbow trout have been introduced throughout the country. Idaho produces over 75% of U.S. farm-raised trout. Other major production states include California, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, and Washington.

Sustainability

- Trout are farm-raised in semi-enclosed concrete raceways, long rectangular tanks with water flowing from one end to the other, mimicking a natural stream. Trout larvae are raised in hatcheries so as not to remove individuals from the wild population.
- Rainbow trout are carnivorous and do require some fishmeal and fish oil in their diets to ensure proper growth and health. Many populations of fish harvested to make fishmeal and oil are fully or over-exploited, therefore it is important that sustainable aquaculture operations source these products from sustainably managed stocks and substitute agricultural proteins and oil for fish proteins and oils when possible. Most rainbow trout diets tend to include 25-33% fishmeal and 10-20% fish oil. The remainder of the protein is made up with poultry byproducts and agricultural proteins. Currently, U.S. farm raised trout are fed about 1.5 lbs of fish to produce 1 lb of trout, which is more efficient than other carnivorous such as salmon.
- Trout are susceptible to some diseases, but farms focus on prevention and sanitation instead of treatment because treatments are often expensive and not always effective.
- Raceways are usually equipped with a settling zone or water is diverted to a settling pond where solid waste will sink to the bottom and can then be collected. Sometimes waste from settling ponds is converted to agricultural fertilizer. Wastewater discharge from fish farms can include feces, uneaten food, nutrients, algae, parasites and pathogens, drugs and other chemicals, and warm water. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency requires each facility to obtain a National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit for all facilities that discharge wastewater more than 30 days per year and produce over 20,000 lbs of fish. An NPDES permit sets limits on the types and amounts of pollutants that the facility can release into the nation's waterways to ensure compliance with the Clean Water Act.
- Raceways are generally equipped with barriers or screens at the end of raceways to prevent fish from escaping. There are no reports of large-scale escapes from trout farms. If escapes did occur, the trout are from the same genetic population that are stocked into rivers and streams for recreational fishing and are unlikely to interfere with the native population.

Info for Chefs and Servers

- Local trout can be obtained from North Carolina. Sunburst Trout Company produces very high quality trout and will ship directly to restaurants. Contact them at 800-673-3051 or sales@sunbursttrout.com.

Source: U.S. Trout Farmers Association – www.ustfa.org

Fishbase – www.fishbase.org

University of Idaho Aquaculture Research Institute – www.webs.uidaho.edu/aquaculture/