

Rainbow Trout

The saga of rainbow trout in Pennsylvania begins in the late 1800's, when the old Fish Commission received rainbow trout eggs from Northern California's Sacramento River Basin where they are native. These eggs were hatched and the fry were raised as brood stock later their offspring were eventually stocked as adult trout in waters around Pennsylvania. At the time of the original stocking rainbows were placed in waters that formerly held brook trout, and waters that were considered marginal. However, very few rainbows established populations of self sustaining fish. Today we find wild rainbows in the Delaware River above Cochecton, in Falling Spring Branch, and in a few other creeks scattered around the Commonwealth.

Rainbow trout are closely related to Pacific Salmon, sharing the same genus name with these wonderful migratory fish, in fact 'bows' migrate from fresh to salt water in 2 forms. The first form is known as Steelhead, because their bodies are as bright as steel when they return from the Pacific Ocean. The other form is a sea run rainbow, the main difference between the 2 fish is that the sea run rainbows spend most of their lives in coastal streams and rivers, the steelhead spend most of their time in the ocean return to coastal streams and river to spawn in native streams.

Rainbow trout and steelhead are prized for their fighting ability, often making long runs and leaping high out of the water. When you catch a rainbow trout your first indication that you've caught a rainbow is a leaping fish, leaping many times before being landed. Because wild rainbows are rare in Pennsylvania, populations of these fish are closely held secrets by many anglers. When they are found anglers won't give out that information. Today, the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission stocks rainbow trout all over the Commonwealth and for the first couple of months of the season anglers enjoy catching these fish. To find out more about Pennsylvania's rainbow trout visit the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission web site at: <http://www.fish.state.pa.us/mpag1.htm>