

Rainbow trout, or *Oncorhynchus mykiss*, are very distinct fish, with their bluish-green or blue-silver bodies and a pink stripe. They have dark lines on their green backs, greenish sides, and a white belly. Small black spots are scattered across their sides, back, and dorsal fin.

Rainbow trout are not known to be picky and are classified as omnivores. They live in freshwater environments, such as streams, rivers, and lakes, and they eat aquatic insects, such as mayflies and stoneflies. Along with these aquatic insects, they also eat fish eggs, grasshoppers, crickets, and ants. Rainbow trout consume small fish, like minnows, and crustaceans, such as crayfish. A few have even eaten fully formed. Though these fish will eat nearly anything, they prefer fresh fish, including suckers, salmon eggs, and worms.

Involving wild, clear rivers and lakes, rainbow trout worldwide populations are healthy and don't have any notable genetic issues or diseases. Though they are considered a pest in some regions where they were introduced and threaten non-native, local rainbow trout will follow rivers out into the sea, where they spend a fraction of their life. These are called steelheads for their extra steel markings obtained from living in the ocean. However, many trout return to their freshwater environment in order to reproduce.

These trout can be 8 to 32 inches in length. They can live up to 3 years and weigh from 27 lbs on average. The original range of the rainbow trout stretched from northern Alaska to the Klamath River in Alaska, but they were introduced here in 1859.

Rainbow trout are less wild, less mating fish. In order to keep their populations flourishing as they are now, we must work to conserve lakes, rivers, streams, and creeks. Many rainbow trout are found worldwide including Pennsylvania,