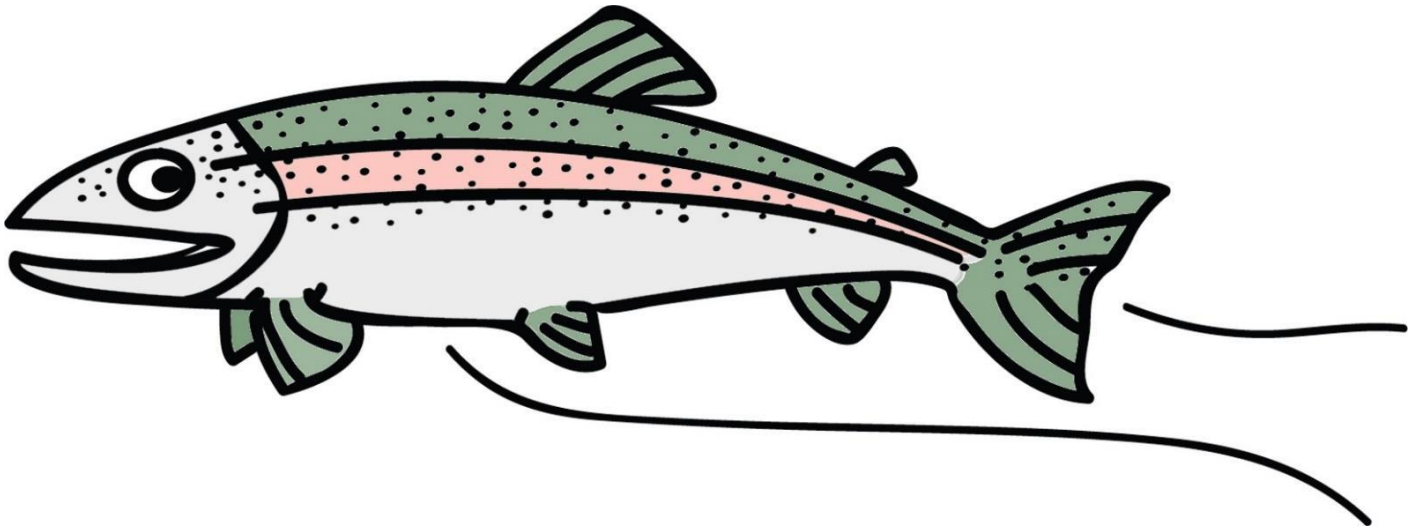


# Rainbow Trout

(Steelhead trout that stay in freshwater)

Scientific name: *Oncorhynchus mykiss*



**Habitat:** Clean, cool freshwater in streams, rivers, and lakes

**Diet:** Eats invertebrates like insects (larvae and adults), crayfish and other crustaceans, and zooplankton; small fish and fish eggs; algae

## What eats them?

- Fish, like bass and larger trout
- Birds, like herons, kingfishers, eagles, and osprey
- Mammals, like raccoons, otters, and humans
- Crayfish (as scavengers of dead fish and when trout are eggs)
- Decomposers, like bacteria

## Other interesting facts:

- Steelhead and rainbow trout are the same species, but steelhead travel to the ocean to continue growing into adults. Then they travel back to where they hatched as eggs. There they spawn (lay eggs) and die. The nutrients from their bodies feed the ecosystem for the next generation.
- Rainbow trout are the only salmonids that stay in freshwater their entire lives.
- Native to the west of the Rockies, rainbow trout were introduced in almost every other state and on every continent except Antarctica.

## Sources:

- “Rainbow Trout (*Oncorhynchus mykiss*).” U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. [fws.gov/species/rainbow-trout-oncorhynchus-mykiss](https://www.fws.gov/species/rainbow-trout-oncorhynchus-mykiss)
- “Rainbow Trout and Steelhead.” National Wildlife Federation: [nwf.org/Educational-Resources/Wildlife-Guide/Fish/Rainbow-Trout-Steelhead](https://www.nwf.org/Educational-Resources/Wildlife-Guide/Fish/Rainbow-Trout-Steelhead)