

## Common trout species in Oregon



### Rainbow

Rainbow trout are the most widely stocked and distributed trout in Oregon. They occur naturally in many rivers and streams and are stocked in ponds and lakes. They are highly variable in color, often silvery, with light pink to red stripe along sides. They can reach up to 30 inches in length. Rainbow trout prefer cold, clear water and are most often found in water 45-60 degrees Fahrenheit.

Their diet consists of minnows, crayfish, insects, and other small aquatic life, making them susceptible to a well-presented spinner, flatfish or fly.



### Redband Rainbow

Redband trout are a subspecies of rainbow trout indigenous to Central Oregon and adapted to the arid conditions east of the Cascades. They inhabit cool streams and rivers as well as some lakes, and they can grow up to 18-inches long.



### Brown

These nonnative trout, introduced in the U.S. in 1883, have a reputation for being wily and elusive. While they prefer cold spring-fed rivers and streams, and lakes with cold water inlets, brown trout also can be more tolerant of warmer streams and lakes. These trout can range in

size from 11-inches long in small streams up to 30 inches in larger rivers and lakes. While brown trout have a varied diet, anglers targeting large brown trout often use spinners or flies that mimic minnows.



### Cutthroat

Cutthroat trout get their name from the red-oranges slashes on the underside of the lower jaw. The most common variety available to most anglers is the coastal cutthroat found in many streams and beaver ponds in coastal drainages. Trout that remain in the stream year round may not get any bigger than 8- or 9-inches long but reward the angler with an aggressive bite and enthusiastic fight. The sea-run strain that travels to saltwater to feed may reach an impressive 17 inches.



### Brook

Brook trout are an introduced fish species that were first stocked in the early 1900s. While technically not a trout (they are a member of the char family), their life history, ecology and habitat are similar to brown and rainbow trout. Brook trout are widely distributed from high mountain lakes to headwater tributaries. They are the most prevalent game fish in both wilderness and non-wilderness high lakes. In small streams and high lakes brook trout are typically small – 5- to-7 inches long. In larger streams and rivers they can reach more than 25 inches.

Because insect larvae and nymphs make up a large part of their diet, they are a favorite target of fly fishers who use flies mimicking these insects. However, these aggressive biters will also go after a variety of other baits and lures.

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# Trout Fishing

Anglers can experience a lifetime of varied and rewarding adventures fishing for trout in Oregon's shaded coastal streams, alpine lakes, urban ponds and high desert rivers.

More people in Oregon fish for trout than for any other kind of fish. Each year millions of fish are caught by young children catching their first fish and by long-time anglers with years of experience. They're caught in ponds, lakes and rivers. They're caught with worms, spinners, flies and lures.

### License requirements

A general Oregon Angling License is all that's required to fish for trout. Youth 12-17 years old need a youth license and kids under 12 fish for free.

### Where and when to fish

Trout are widely distributed and can be found in almost any water body that provides:

- cool, clean water
- food such as aquatic insects, minnows and crawfish
- cover and protection from predators

Trout habitats are often divided into lakes and ponds (stillwaters) or rivers and streams (moving waters). Fish location, behavior and fishing tactics will vary depending on whether you're fishing in stillwaters or moving waters.

### Finding trout in lakes and ponds

In stillwaters trout are on the move, "cruising" the water looking for food. At the same time, trout don't want to get too far away from cover that offers protection from predators. Some likely places to look for trout in lakes and ponds include:

- near or above aquatic vegetation
- around logs, stumps, rocks or other structure



- at stream inlets where streams flowing into the lake or pond are bringing cool fresh water and a likely supply of food
- deeper waters especially in the warm summer months when trout are looking for cooler water as well as protection from overhead predators

The best time of year to trout fish in many lower elevation lakes is in the spring and fall when the water is cooler and the trout are more active. This also is when most lakes are stocked. In the warm summer months, anglers can look for trout in cooler

deeper waters, or in high mountain lakes that remain cool. In warmer parts of the state, such as the Willamette Valley or along the coast, trout fishing in lakes or ponds can be good well into the winter months—for anglers hardy enough to brave cold and wet weather.

### Finding trout in rivers and streams

In moving waters, trout tend to hold in one spot and wait for the water current to bring food to them. A primary food source for these fish is aquatic insects adrift in the current. In addition to looking for food and protection from predators, trout in moving waters are also looking for a place to rest from the current. So some likely places to look for trout in rivers and streams include:

- behind rocks or other structure *HINT: Look for water where the surface is textured with bumps or riffles, which are often created as water flows over rocks and boulders on the river bed.*
- near steep or undercut banks
- in deeper, slower pools



Most rivers and streams fish best in the spring and fall when water temperatures are cooler. Very few rivers and streams are stocked, so you'll be fishing for naturally reproducing or wild fish. As the water gets warmer, look for trout in faster riffles where the water gets re-oxygenated at it tumbles over rocks. Some rivers, especially in Central Oregon, are open for trout year round. Fishing can be good in the winter months – for hardy anglers willing to brave the cold and snow – but look for trout in slow, calm waters where they don't have to fight the current.

Tackle for trout fishing

The list of necessary trout fishing gear and equipment can be very simple. A rod and reel, and a small selection of lures, bait hooks, bobbers and artificial bait is enough to go fishing just about anywhere you might find trout. A good shopping list to get started might include:

- A lightweight 6-foot spincasting or spinning rod with matching reel and 4-6 pound monofilament line
- A handful of 1/16 oz. spinners
- Package of size 8 bait hooks
- Couple of red/white bobbers
- Jar of PowerBait or PowerEggs
- A package of #5 lead split shot
- Worms

Fly fishing is another popular way to fish for trout. It requires more specialized equipment and tools, but a good starter outfit could include:

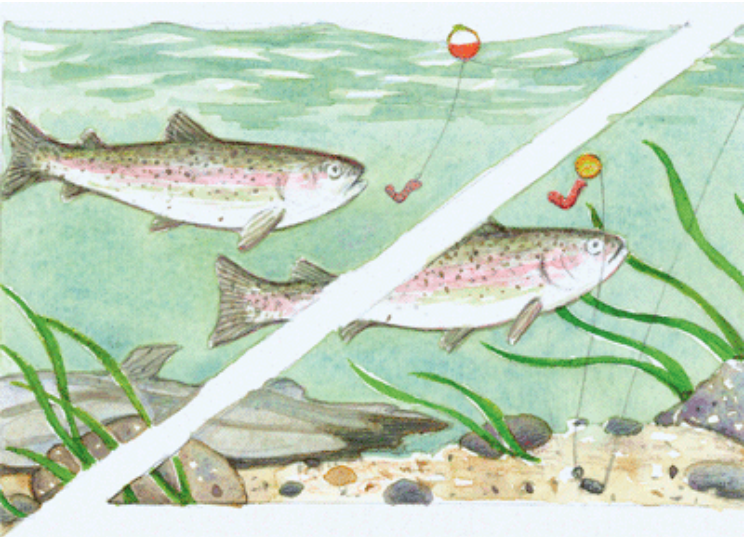
- Graphite 5-weight fly rod, 9 feet long
- Matching fly reel
- Weight forward, 5-weight fly line
- Tapered monofilament leaders, 4 X 7.5 feet long
- Spools of 4X and 5X tippet
- Assorted streamside tools
- Flies

Fishing techniques for lakes and ponds

There are lots (and lots) of ways to fish for trout, but three of the easiest ways to fish for trout in lakes are:

- Suspending bait under a bobber. Start with a piece of worm or a little PowerBait or similar product on a bait hook. Attach a small lead weight just above the hook to help the bait sink, and add a bobber 1 ½ to 3 feet above the hook. Cast out to a likely spot and wait for the bobber to wiggle, dive or jerk. This is a good technique when fish are cruising nearer the surface or when you want to keep your bait and hook suspended above a weed bed.
- Fishing with bait off the bottom. Sometimes trout are in deeper water and the bait needs to be down deep where the fish are. In this technique there is no bobber to suspend the bait. Instead the lead weight is attached about 1 ½ foot above the baited book and

- cast out. The lead weight will sink, but the bait will float up and hover 1 ½ above the bottom of the lake.
- Retrieving a spinner, spoon or fly. Spinners mimic small minnows, leeches and other favorite trout food. When fishing a spinner or spoon, cast it over likely looking water. Let it sink for a minute then begin reeling it in (retrieving). Vary the amount of time you let the spinner sink and the speed of the retrieve until you find the combination that catches fish.



Fishing techniques for rivers and streams

In moving water it is the current, instead of your retrieve, that will effect how your lure moves in the water. Some good trout fishing techniques for moving waters include:

- Casting a spinner or spoon. Begin by casting the spinner slightly upriver and reel in any slack line. As the current carries the spinner down river, hold as much fishing line off the water as you can to achieve a natural “drift.” Once the spinner has swung toward the shore and is straight down river, begin a moderate retrieve.
- Drifting a worm or an artificial bait (PowerBait, for example) with enough split shot to get within a few inches of the bottom. Sometimes adding a bobber will help keep track of where the bait is drifting.
- NOTE: Where a river slows and deepens into a pool with very little current, you can use many of the same trout fishing techniques you would use in a small pond or other stillwater.

Wherever you go, be sure to check the Oregon Sport Fishing Regulations for the daily bag limits, bait restrictions or other fishing guidelines for the specific lake, river or stream you'll be fishing.

A final word about keeping fish

Each year, the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife stocks millions of trout in lakes, ponds and reservoirs throughout the state. These hatchery fish are raised and stocked for anglers to take home and enjoy on the grill or in the frying pan or oven.

However, most trout in rivers and streams are wild fish that reproduce naturally. Some anglers prefer to release these fish so they can be caught again, or perhaps reproduce. In a handful of rivers and lakes, catch-and-release fishing is required. If you're going to release the fish you catch, here are some tips for doing it safely:

- Use barbless hooks.
- Land the fish quickly, before it tires too much.
- Wet your hands before handling the fish, and try not to remove it from the water.
- If you're going to take a photo, have the camera set and the scene composed before lifting the fish out of the water and quickly taking the picture.
- Use needle-nosed pliers or hemostats to remove the hook. If the hook is deeply imbedded, cut the leader near the hook, which will rust away after a few days.
- Revive the fish in the current before letting it go.

Three knots to know

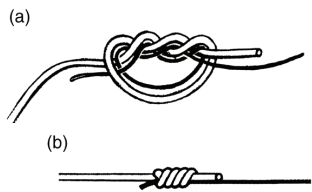
Improved Clinch Knot

An old standby known as the fisherman's knot



Surgeon's Knot

Used to join two lines (one short) together.



Palomar Knot

The easiest to tie, a good choice to hold terminal tackle (hooks, swivels and lures).



Knotsense  
Tips for tying better knots

More fish are probably lost because of improperly tied knots than any other single reason. Yet anglers who spend hours practicing their casting, studying entomology or tying flies often neglect this simple and, ok, boring fundamental. But if tying better knots might help us land more fish, it makes sense to give knot tying a little more attention.

Five pointers for tying better knots:

1) Learn to tie a few simple knots well.

There are dozens of knots for the angler. They publish whole books with nothing but pictures of how to tie knots. But start with just three knots, and learn how to tie them really well. Some good choices are:

- \* **Improved clinch knot**—to tied the hook to the line
- \* **Surgeons knot**—to tie two lines together
- \* **Palomar knot**—another knot to tie the hook to the line

2) Make sure you know how to tighten every knot properly.

Knots break when they slip, and they slip if they aren't properly tightened. Pull on all the lines going into or coming out of the knot. Tighten both the short tag ends and the longer standing lines.

3) Just before you tighten the knot, moisten it with saliva.

This little bit of moisture does two things: it helps the knot “seat” or fully tighten, it also reduces friction heat that can cause the leader or tippet to stretch and weaken.

4) Test each knot before you make that first cast.

Give the line a few healthy tugs. Wrap the bend of the hook around a ring (the finger holes of your hemostat, a d-ring on your vest, etc.) and tug on the tippet to make sure the knot is secure.

5) Practice tying knots.

Most people either laugh or groan at the thought of practicing knots. But standing on the shore with fish jumping all around you is a terrible place to try to remember how to tie a clinch knot. It's not like you have to practice every day – you're not learning a musical instrument. But grab a bit of line and some hooks, and tie a few favorite knots over and over again. Do this a couple of times and you'll be pleased with how easily it comes back to you when you're on the water.

For more information about trout fishing in Oregon, check out the ODFW Web site at **www.odfw.com**. There you can buy a license, check out the Sport Fishing Regulations, see the Trout Stocking Schedule and get an update on current fishing conditions with the weekly Recreation Report, which includes fishing updates on almost 200 rivers, stream, lakes, reservoirs and ponds throughout the state.