

# Around Wyoming

## The Trout Life Cycle

Have you ever seen minnows swimming near the edge of a stream or pond? Did you ever wonder what kind they were? Well fish develop in the wild in a number of stages called the fish life cycle. What you might be seeing aren't minnows at all, just young trout beginning their journey to adulthood!

The life cycle of a trout begins when the female fish lays her eggs in a stream or river with a gravel bottom. The female digs a small nest, called a redd, and lays her eggs. The male then comes and fertilizes the eggs. Although trout do not guard their eggs once they have been laid, the female will cover them with a small amount of gravel for protection. Depending on the species of trout eggs, they will incubate from three to five months.

After around 20 days, the fertilized eggs show dark spots. These are the fish's eyespots, so the eggs are called eyed eggs. These eggs begin to develop in the gravel and then hatch into sac fry.

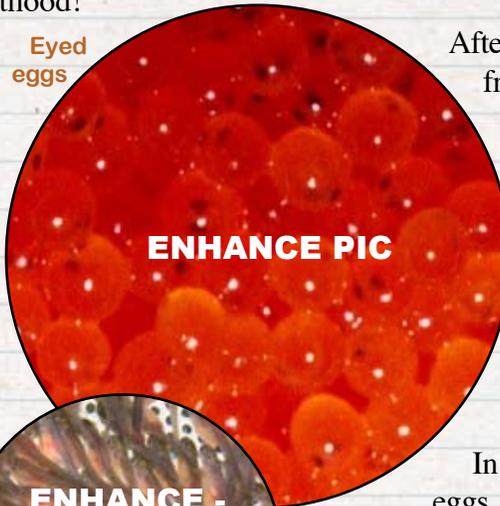
**Fish lay their eggs in gravel called redds.**

Sac fry are sensitive to light and generally stay in the gravel. They get their food from the yolk sac attached to their bellies. The yolk sac usually last from 10 to 20 days and helps the fish grow bigger.



Sac fry

Eyed eggs



**ENHANCE PIC**



**ENHANCE -  
FRY TO SWIM  
BEYOND  
CIRCLE**

After several weeks, the fish emerge as fry. Fry are the tiny fish after the yolk sac has been used up. They will then swim to the surface to look for food.

Once they get bigger, young trout are known as fingerlings. Most of the fish the Wyoming Game and Fish Department stocks are at the fingerling stage.

In the wild, if a female trout lays 4,000 eggs, only around 40 will live to be one year old. This is because they have lots of predators to face. Can you think of predators that might feed on small fish?

Those who do live to be adult trout will then lay their eggs in the gravel and the cycle will start all over again.

If you would like to see the different stages of a trout life cycle, visit a fish hatchery! The Wyoming Game and Fish Department has ten hatcheries around the state.



Fingerlings



Fish are stocked all over Wyoming.



**BETTER MAP**

Visit a Wyoming Game & Fish Department fish hatchery near you!