

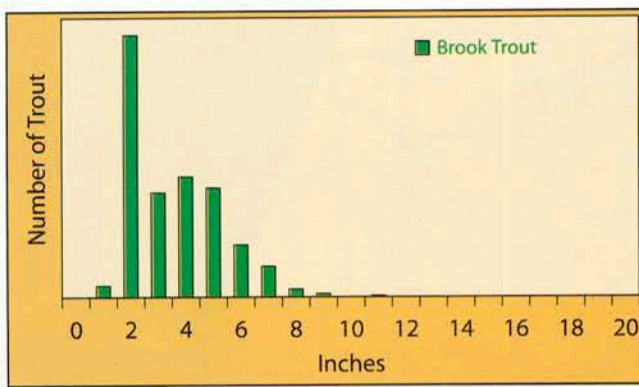
Brook Trout (*Salvelinus fontinalis*)



- *Yellow or reddish-orange spots on sides and belly
- *Light wormlike markings on upper body
- *Leading edge of lower fins white with black stripe

Brook trout are primarily found in small streams at elevations above 3,000 feet where water temperatures are typically below 61 °F. Brook trout rarely exceed 12 inches in mountain streams and anglers typically encounter 4 to 7 inch fish. Few brook trout grow to larger sizes due to natural bottlenecks such as floods, droughts, and general lack of food and shelter. Brook trout mature at 1-2 years of age. They spawn in October to November, and depending on size, females may produce a few dozen to a few hundred eggs; juveniles emerge in February or March.

Brook trout are very aggressive feeders and will tackle just about anything: fish, salamanders, crayfish, and variety of bugs. Food is typically in short supply in headwater streams, so brook trout rely heavily on prey that falls into the stream from the canopy. Ants, caterpillars and inchworms are often eaten by brook trout. Despite their ferocious appetite they are wary. Anglers should approach these fish cautiously, because once spooked, they can be difficult to catch.

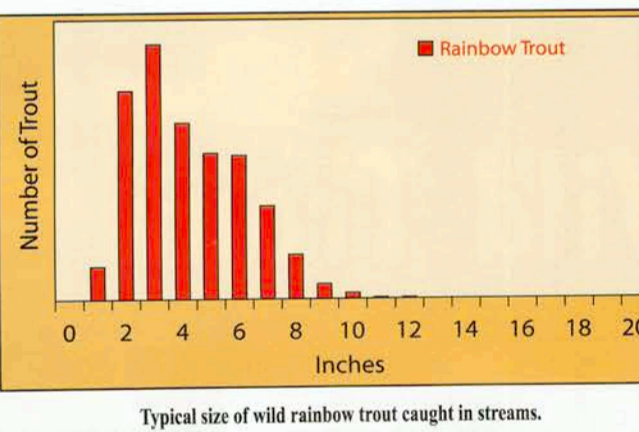


Rainbow Trout (*Oncorhynchus mykiss*)



- *Body olive to silver in color
- *Small black spots throughout the body that extend into the bottom of the tail
- *Pink streak along middle of the body

Rainbow trout, native to Pacific coast drainages, had been stocked throughout eastern Tennessee by the early 1900's. Today, rainbow trout are our most abundant wild trout, inhabiting a wide range of stream elevations. They may share lower stream reaches with brown trout and may compete with brook trout in upper stream reaches. Wild rainbow trout can live 6 to 8 years, but few survive beyond 3 years. They mature at 2-3 years of age. Depending on size, females can produce hundreds of eggs. Rainbows are spring spawners, depositing eggs in February or March; juveniles emerge in April. Young rainbow trout eat aquatic insects. Despite their larger size, adult rainbows maintain an appetite for insects, but will also consume crayfish and small fish. Anglers may catch wild rainbow trout up to 15 inches in length, although fish in the 7-10 inch range are much more common.



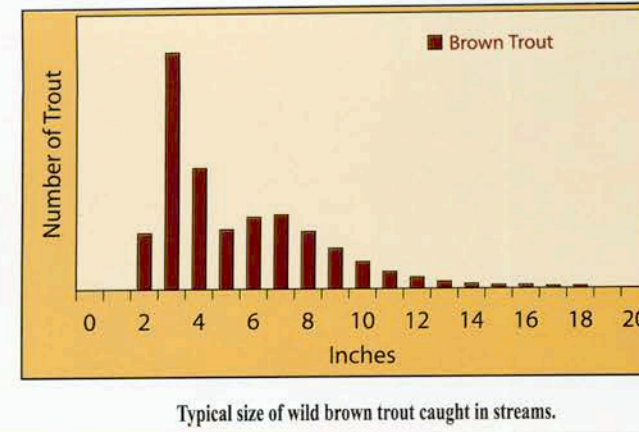
Brown Trout (*Salmo trutta*)



- *Brown to yellowish body color
- *Large dark spots and reddish dots, many having halos
- *Tail is slightly forked; there are no spots on the bottom of the tail

Brown trout are not native to Tennessee; they are originally from Europe and were introduced to this region decades ago. Now naturalized, brown trout typically inhabit lower elevation reaches of streams, often coexisting with rainbow trout. Tennessee's wild brown trout can live twice as long and attain much greater sizes than either rainbow or brook trout. Biologists have determined that brown trout can live to be 12 years old and grow to trophy lengths of 20 inches or more, even in small streams. Brown trout are known for their ability to prey on fish, including trout. Biologists often observe that few other fish are found in a pool that holds a really big brown trout.

Brown trout mature at 2-3 years of age. They spawn in October to November and, depending on size, females may produce hundreds of eggs; juveniles emerge in February or March. Young brown trout feed mostly on aquatic insects, small crayfish and minnows. Adults feed on fish, crayfish, rodents, and salamanders. Large brown trout tend to feed during low light conditions and after dark, making them more difficult to catch. Typical trout baits and lures will work for brown trout, but slightly larger tackle may help lure in the big ones.



Tennessee's Native Brook Trout



The brook trout is the only native trout species in Tennessee. Its historic range is limited to the eastern counties, much like today. However, years ago they were more common at lower elevations. Logging practices in the 1800's eliminated many of Tennessee's brook trout populations. Early recovery efforts introduced brook trout from northern hatcheries. Recently biologists have genetically

identified the truly native populations of brook trout, known as southern Appalachian strain brook trout. There are over 100 brook trout populations in Tennessee, of these about half are known to be native, southern Appalachian populations. Not surprisingly, preliminary investigations suggest that these fish are better suited for our region than introduced northern populations. Biologists in the southeast are dedicated to maintaining native brook trout populations. Through restoration efforts they have actually increased the number of populations in recent years.



Legend

- Public Lands
- Great Smoky Mountains National Park
- Major Rivers and Reservoirs
- Rivers and Streams
- Trails
- County Boundary
- Interstates
- Federal and State Highways
- Local Roads
- Camping Area
- Picnic Area

0 2 4 8 12 Miles



- Brook Trout
- Rainbow Trout
- Brown Trout
- Rainbow and Brown Trout

How to Catch Wild Trout

Flyfishing: Most streams are home to a variety of mayfly, caddisfly, stonefly and terrestrial insect species. Dry and wet patterns that loosely imitate these species will work. Tennessee's wild trout live in infertile streams with quick moving water, so they can't afford to be too selective as your fly drifts past. With dry flies, the keys are making drag-free presentations and seeing your fly (lighting is often poor). Typically, choose dry flies with light-colored hair wings that float well and are readily visible such as elk hair caddis, thunderheads, or any of the various Wulff patterns (e.g., Royal Wulff) in sizes 16 to 12. Productive nymphs include hare's ears or pheasant tails in sizes 18 to 12. Although catch rates can be high for even the novice angler, it takes considerable skill to lure larger trout to the fly. Occasionally try minnow imitations, such as size 8 to 10 Clouser minnow or woolly bugger, to attract large brown trout.

Lures: Wild trout will hit a well presented lure as readily as any bait. The key to fishing lures is to use the lightest line possible (2-6 lb) and cast strategically. If possible, cast beyond the area you are targeting. Retrieve the lure through deeper pockets and on routes that will take your lure near overhanging logs or boulders. In general, the lure should drift or "swim" in a downstream direction. Commonly used lures include in-line spinners and spoons (#0-1), small plastic jigs (1/64-1/16 oz) in a variety of colors, and small crankbaits (1 inch). Larger crankbaits (minnow or crayfish patterns) will target larger brown trout.

Bait: Wild trout are opportunistic, meaning they will eat anything that falls into the stream. Natural baits such as worms, minnows, crayfish, and crickets are very good baits for trout. Bait is commonly drifted along the bottom of the stream, or allowed to settle in large pools. Light line (2-6 lb) is recommended to give the bait a more natural appearance as it bounces along the bottom. In swift water you may need to add small splitshot weights to keep it down. Hook size and type will depend on the bait type, but generally a size 6 or 8 hook is adequate for trout. Circle hooks are recommended because they are designed to hook fish in the mouth, and are less likely to be swallowed by the trout.

Releasing Trout: If you intend to release your trout, please follow these suggestions to ensure its survival:

- 1) Don't play the fish to exhaustion.
- 2) Wet your hands before holding the trout, or keep it in the water.
- 3) Carefully remove the hook. If it swallowed the hook, then cut the line close to the hook. Don't attempt to rip it out.
- 4) Release the trout, holding it upright in the water as it regains balance.
- 5) Don't cull your catch. Don't release trout that have been placed on a stringer.

Special fishing regulations apply to many wild trout streams. A common regulation is that only single-hook artificial lures may be used. Check the Tennessee or Great Smoky Mountains National Park fishing regulations before you go.



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