



The Bath Fish Hatchery is located in Steuben County on Fish Hatchery Road off state route 54, one mile north of the village of Bath. The hatchery is open to the public from 8:00 a.m. to 3:45 p.m. every day including weekends and holidays. You may contact us at (607) 776-7087, or write to us at 7169 Fish Hatchery Road, Bath, NY 14810.

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This hatchery was established in 1893 as a public fish hatchery for rearing trout. It was run by the New York State Fish and Game Commission.

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Fish of various life stages are present at the hatchery throughout the year. Eyed eggs (eggs that have the eye of the fish visible through the shell of the egg-which means that the egg is fairly close to

hatching) are present in April, October, and November. Sac fry (hatchlings that still have the yolk sac attached) or small fish are present from November through June. Fingerlings (fish greater than 1" in length but less than one year old) are present from February through November. Yearlings (fish older than one year) are present from December through June. Adult fish may be seen in our display pond year round. It is located across the creek from the visitor parking area. These fish are just for display and are not brood stock. There is also a kiosk area inside the gate which has displays of hatchery history, stocking locations, and trout development.

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This hatchery produces approximately 550,000 fingerling fish and 260,000 yearling fish annually. This translates to around 80,000 pounds of fish. Many fingerling fish are stocked in the fall at an average length of 5"-7". Some fingerling fish are transferred to other hatcheries for rearing to yearling size. The remainder of the fingerling fish mature through the winter into yearling fish. Yearling fish are stocked in the spring at an average 6"-9" in length. Current staffing provides for five full time employees to perform the necessary fish cultural duties. There are three spring sources and a pumped well which supplies the hatchery with high quality water. Water flowing into the Inside and Outside raceways passes through degassers which remove nitrogen and provide oxygen. In addition there are twelve concrete ponds which hold fingerling fish in the summer and yearling fish in the winter. These ponds are covered with predation deterrent buildings to keep out the herons, kingfishers, mink, and raccoons. They also shade the ponds and reduce the growth of algae. Water flows for these ponds vary accordingly from 500 to 1500 gallons per minute. Water temperatures range from 45 degrees F to 56 degrees F, depending on seasonal air temperature. Because the water is flowing and reaches a low of only 45 degrees, it does not freeze in the winter. Consequently fish may be grown outdoors all year.

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The major species of fish reared by this hatchery are brown trout, lake trout and rainbow trout. These fish are raised from eggs received in the spring and fall of the year. The brown trout are received as eyed eggs in the fall from the Randolph Fish Hatchery. This state hatchery maintains a domestic brown trout brood stock. Two strains of rainbow trout eggs are obtained in the spring from Cayuga Lake. One strain consists of wild parents. The other strain is a cross of wild Cayuga Lake females with domestic males from the Randolph Fish Hatchery. A domestic strain of rainbow trout is also raised. These fish are a combination of eyed eggs received from Randolph and fingerling fish received from the Van Hornesville Hatchery. Lake trout eggs are obtained in the fall from Cayuga Lake wild fish.

Newly spawned eggs (called "green") are incubated in special screen trays. Eyed eggs are transferred to slotted trays for hatching. These are placed in troughs and are supplied with a constant flow of water. It is the water temperature that determines the amount of time required for the eggs to develop. When the eggs hatch, the resulting emergents (called sac fry) are nourished initially by a yolk sac which protrudes from their abdominal region. As the yolk sac is absorbed (3-5 weeks, depending again on water temperature) a dry starter fish food diet is introduced to provide nourishment. Young fish grow at a rapid rate. The initial rearing stage for small fish requires the utilization of 33 troughs and 17 concrete raceways indoors. These rearing units are cleaned once each day to remove accumulated fish waste and uneaten food. The use of additional rearing units is necessary to provide adequate growing room. Each rearing unit type has a "carrying capacity", that is, a certain maximum weight of fish it can hold. Once this maximum weight has been reached, no more growth will occur. At this time fish are thinned out into more or larger rearing units. Rearing space for fingerling and yearling fish consists of ten outdoor raceways and twelve large concrete ponds.

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Small fish are fed nine times each day by hand. Fingerlings are fed continuously over a twelve hour period with the use of special feeders. Yearling fish are fed using demand feeders which allow them to feed at will. All fish are monitored on a daily basis for any health problems which may occur. Hatchery fish are susceptible to bacterial, viral and parasitic diseases. Many times illness occurs simply from the stress caused by their "intensive" culture (which means raising at high densities). Routine monthly samples of the fish are taken to assess their rate of growth and overall condition. Dry trout foods are available in a variety of diets and sizes. Food size can be increased accordingly as the fish continue to grow. The amount of food to be fed each day is adjusted as necessary to assure optimum growth and minimum dollar expenditure.

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When stocking season arrives the fish produced at this hatchery will be stocked in the appropriate public waters as determined by the regional fisheries staff in Avon and Cortland. At this time fish may be transferred between hatcheries to meet stocking requirements. There are 11 other NYSDEC fish hatcheries; three warm/coolwater (raising walleye, muskellunge and tiger muskellunge) and eight coldwater (raising trout and salmon). The Bath Hatchery is responsible for nine counties in NYS: Steuben, Chemung, Yates, Schuyler, Seneca, Cayuga, Tompkins, Tioga and Broome.

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Fingerling fish are usually stocked during September and October. Yearling fish are generally stocked from mid- March through mid-June. Each year this hatchery stocks approximately 800,000 fish into some seventy public waterways. Fish are loaded onto trucks specially equipped with tanks of oxygenated water for transport to the designated stocking site. Small fish are hand loaded using a scap net to transfer fish from the rearing unit to the transport tank on the fish truck. Larger fish may be hand loaded or loaded using a fish pump. This device pumps fish and water from the pond to the dewatering tower where the water and fish pass over a screen, allowing the water to drain off. The water returns to the pond through a pipe and the fish travel down a short tube into the transport tanks on the fish truck. Most of the fish are stocked directly from the fish truck into the designated water using hoses and/or buckets and scap nets. The use of boats, barges, helicopters, airplanes and landing craft may be necessary to place fish in a specific location away from shore. Currently this hatchery has three stocking trucks, two are equipped with six transport tanks each and the other truck has three tanks for stocking smaller waters.