

The wild trout of a coastal stream system in Wester Ross

TROUT FOOD

Troutless lochan:
Supports a rich diversity of other aquatic wildlife.



Wind-blown insects:
Can represent the main food for trout in summertime.



Caddis (sedge) fly larvae: Food for trout in lochs and streams.



Stoneflies:
Nymphs are found in fast-flowing streams.



Mayflies:
Nymphs and adults are important food for trout.



Juvenile Herring and Sprat (whitebait):
Important food for sea trout.



Sandeels:
Sea trout grow fat when sandeels are plentiful.



Common Prawn:
Found in the mussel beds in estuaries.

Adult sea trout: Mature after 2+ summers at sea. Overwintering trout were found in Loch Gairloch in 2010 & 2011.

Sea lice:
Lepeophtheirus salmonis is a natural parasite of sea trout, but numbers can be much higher near salmon farms.

Harbour Seal:
Feeds mainly on other fish. Unhealthy sea trout are more likely to be taken by a seal, particularly in winter when the sea is cooler.

PREDATORS

Red-throated Diver:
Please don't disturb divers on breeding lochans.

Golden Eagle

Hill loch: Each loch is different. Lochs at the top of a chain often have larger trout!

Angling: Permits for hill loch fishing are available locally: please ask in local shops or Post Offices.

Hill loch trout:
Isolated populations live above falls in hill lochs and streams. Some grow to 40cm or more in lochs.

Impassable Waterfall:
Barrier to sea trout.

Spraint site:
Nutrient-rich oasis.

Otter runs:
Networks of trails through the hills.

Otter: Catches trout in spawning streams in the autumn.

Trout spawning:
Trout lay their eggs in gravel in autumn. The female may be a sea trout, the male a burn trout.

Trout eggs:
Remain buried in the streambed through the winter.

Trout fry:
'Swim up' from the streambed in April and grow quickly if there is plenty of food.

Dipper:
Takes washed-out eggs at spawning time.

Heron:
Feeds along the coast and inland. Small trout are taken in streams and estuaries.

Estuary: Early-returned sea trout may linger here in June if heavily infected with sea lice.

Red-breasted Merganser:
Takes more smolts in dry years when smolt migration is delayed.

Sea trout smolts:
Migrate to sea in April and May, usually after 3 or 4 years in freshwater. In drought years, migration may be delayed.

Finnock:
Most sea trout return to freshwater after their first summer at sea when still immature.