



Life of a Grayling



Grayling lay their eggs in April in gravel 'redds', small dips that they dig out of the gravel in the river bed, they incubate for 15-25days. After they hatch they move into shallow slow water at the side of the river living off their yolk sac for 4-5 days before they begin to feed on small invertebrates. At roughly 6cm long they move out into the river where they grow very quickly reaching 10-12cm in length in their first year. In their second year they are still growing quickly reaching 17-25cms in length, after this growth is much slower. Grayling reach a typical weight of 1-2 pounds, a large female can produce up to 10,000 eggs.

The characteristic feature of the Grayling is the large dorsal fin on the back. Mature male fish have a particularly large fin and this can be used to identify the sex of the fish. Grayling live in shoals, not as individuals like trout.

The diet of the Grayling is mainly invertebrates such as freshwater shrimps and caddis larvae, although they can feed at the surface on emerging or adult insects.



Grayling were introduced to the Tweed in the 1850s by the Marquis of Lothian as a winter sport fish. They were held in a pond at Monteviot, but it got flooded and this released them earlier than planned.

The Scottish record for Grayling was caught on the upper Tweed, around Stobo in 1994, it weighed 3lbs 1oz. However, a larger fish of 3lbs 7oz was taken in England on the Glen in 1998 which was a minimum of 8 years old. Grayling of over 4lbs have been caught and weighed on the River Tweed and River Teviot but haven't been officially recorded.



A Grayling fry from the Leader Water in September. It is already the size of many one year old Trout and Salmon.

Grayling are preyed upon by fish-eating birds such as cormorants.



Grayling fry, Walkerburn, July 2006

Questions

What size do young Grayling grow to when they are one year old?

What weight is an average adult Grayling?

How many eggs will a large female Grayling lay?

Where is the dorsal fin?



How can you use to help you to tell the sex of a *Grayling*?

What is a group of *Grayling* called?

What do *Grayling* eat?

Who introduced *Grayling* to the *Tweed* and when?

What is the Scottish record for the weight of a *Grayling*?

KS1 Science – notice that animals have offspring which grow into adults

KS2 – Observe the lifecycle changes in living things

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