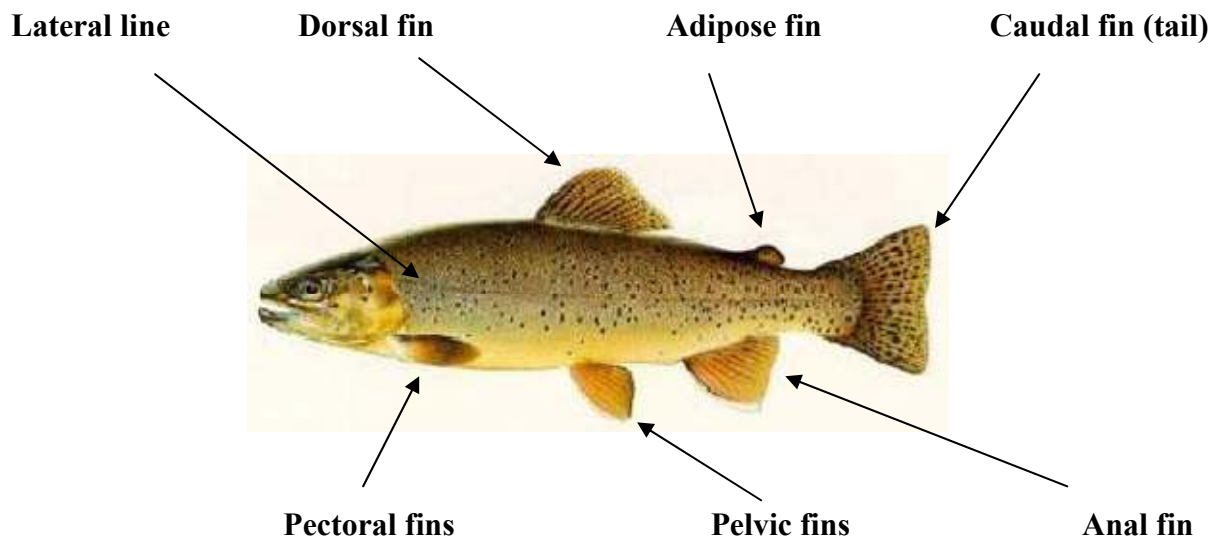


HVAC Discovery Data

Getting To Know Your Quarry

Trout have finely tuned senses. The two most important must be sight and “hearing”. Fish have ears which are below the skin behind their eyes and these can pick up noises and vibrations or shock waves in the water but these ears alone would not be adequate for its survival needs. Fish therefore have an enhanced sensory system in the form of a visible lateral line which runs along each side of the body midway between the top of the back and bottom of the belly. This lateral line will detect vibrations or shock waves at a considerable distance.

John McInnes gives good advice in his book when he tells the reader to “tread softly” because the clumsy angler will scare away most of the fish he approaches.



This angler was stalking a trout during summer and could not be seen by the fish, being screened behind some tall riverside grass. The rod was carried low so as not to give the game away. The angler slipped whilst moving up the grassy bank and his boot came down heavily on the soft ground. A glance through the thick grass was enough to confirm that the trout had heard the noise by picking up vibrations and it was well on its way to safety out in mid stream. There is little point in fishing to a spooked brown trout under these circumstances because the chances of capture have been reduced virtually to nil.

Another example which illustrates the ability to sense even minute disturbances in the water was when the same angler was fishing to a cruising trout and decided to place his weighted nymph well behind the fish to avoid scaring the trout away if it saw the fly line. As soon as the nymph plopped into the water, almost two metres behind the trout, the fish turned quickly to investigate. So although the trout did not see the nymph hit the water, it picked up shock waves and reacted instantly.

Most anglers realise how sharp sighted trout are both in and above the water. It is really important to try to stay below the horizon or blend into the background by wearing clothing which is neutral coloured or dull in hue. Like all animals, trout are attuned to detecting movement. This means that the wary angler can approach closer by moving slowly. In many cases a trout will be seen at close quarters if the angler remains hard to see.

It is interesting when fishing after dark because the angler can get away with some sloppy casting and indeed can cast straight to a feeding fish on the surface without spooking it. The same fish will easily detect a very small fly and continually feed on minute creatures. We have to assume that trout have excellent night vision but do they also rely more or less at night on their sense of hearing when feeding? Since they behave less warily at night, I would surmise that they rely more on eyesight.