

PA Trout In the Classroom:

Release Day

RELEASE DAY

The hard work has paid off and the release day has arrived. Heron, kingfishers, and other fish are excited too. To minimize predation during the release, select calm waters with cover on the waterway listed on the Designation of Agent letter. The stream indicated on the Designation of Agent letter is the only state-permitted stream for the trout release.

| MATERIALS NEEDED | |
|------------------|--|
| | Sturdy cooler or bucket with a loose-fitting lid |
| | Dechlorinated ice in sealed baggies or frozen water bottles with labels removed |
| | Battery-powered air stone or bait aerator |
| | Release containers per student (ie. Cups, small buckets) |
| | Waterproof, closed-toed shoes and weather-appropriate clothing |
| | Change of clothes and a towel per student |
| | Optional: Stream study equipment to conduct a stream study/water quality assessment to determine the health of the stream prior to release |

| TRAVEL PREPARATIONS | |
|---------------------|--|
| | Fill cooler/bucket half full of aquarium water. Take care that the container is not too heavy for transport. Filling halfway eases the weight, reduces spills, and provides sloshing that aids in keeping the water well oxygenated. |
| | Transfer fingerlings to the cooler/bucket with a net. Do not overcrowd the buckets. Take care to add no greater than 50 fingerlings per container. |
| | Add ice baggies or bottles to the water and monitor temperature to maintain consistency. |
| | Insert and start the air stone or bait aerator. |
| | Close the cooler/bucket with a lid to keep fingerlings from jumping out. Avoid pinching the aerator tubing. |

| RELEASE SITE INSTRUCTION | |
|--------------------------|--|
| | Slowly acclimate the fingerlings to the stream temperatures and chemistry by gradually adding one or two cups of water to the bucket/cooler every five minutes. Monitor the temperature of the cooler/bucket. Avoid drastic temperature changes of greater than a few degrees every ten minutes. |
| | Once cooler/bucket temperatures are within one or two degrees of the stream temperature, release the fingerlings using the provided cups. Lower the cup to the stream and gently tip the cup to release the fingerling. |

Release Day Activities

Releasing fingerlings is a fun conclusion to the classroom experience. Some instructors choose to release with little fanfare. Others plan elaborate field days, invite other classrooms and community partners, and schedule a full day of environmental learning. Both are perfect options.

To help plan release day, consider these ideas:

STATION ROTATION EVENT-

- ❖ Fishing
- ❖ Macroinvertebrate collection and identification
- ❖ Water quality and stream habitat assessments
- ❖ Turbidity experiments
- ❖ Stream flow experiment (tennis ball and a timer)
- ❖ Invasive species identification
- ❖ Streamside litter clean up
- ❖ Tree planting (riparian buffer lesson)
- ❖ Pollinator planting (native plant lesson)
- ❖ Nature hike
- ❖ Knot tying
- ❖ Journaling
- ❖ Nature sketches
- ❖ Forest bathing
- ❖ Bird identification
- ❖ Plant/tree identification

GUESTS AND PRESENTERS TO CONSIDER-

- ❖ Watershed groups/alliances
- ❖ County conservation district
- ❖ Sportsman groups such as Trout Unlimited
- ❖ Nature centers and conservancies
- ❖ Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR)
- ❖ PA Game Commission
- ❖ PA Fish and Boat Commission
- ❖ Historians (specific to the area or the watershed)
- ❖ Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)
- ❖ Local officials
- ❖ School administrators
- ❖ Penn State Extension

 **RESOURCE:** [Field Trip Samples - PENNSYLVANIA TROUT IN THE CLASSROOM](#)

RELEASE DAY TROUBLESHOOTING

| | |
|-----------------|--|
| Question | When do I release my trout? |
| Answer | The trout release date is determined by the size of your trout. The average size of released fingerlings is 1 ½ to 2 ½ inches. It is also determined by the transportation funding and substitute teacher availability. Most TIC classrooms release their trout in March, April, or May. |
| Question | How do I plan a release/what should I do on my release day? |
| Answer | <p>All teachers plan their own release day with the help of their program partner. Ideas of activities to do on release day:</p> <p>The release day is your opportunity to creatively incorporate hands-on, out of class education, public awareness of cold water resources, community projects, and a sense of interconnectedness with the community and its watersheds.</p> <p>Sign-up on the PA Trout In the Classroom Facebook Group to share, ask questions from other TIC teachers and program partners and more!</p> |