

On The Reel With Sweetwater

SFG Upcoming Events

• If you missed our most recent talk at the Cherry Creek Chapter of TU, CFI will be giving another instructional talk about successful fisheries improvement strategies at the Cheyenne Mountain Chapter of Trout Unlimited at 7:00 pm on May 27th. Their chapter is located at the Retired Enlisted Association, 834 Emery Circle, just across from the UPS building, in Colorado Springs.



The Quick And The Well, ... Not So Quick

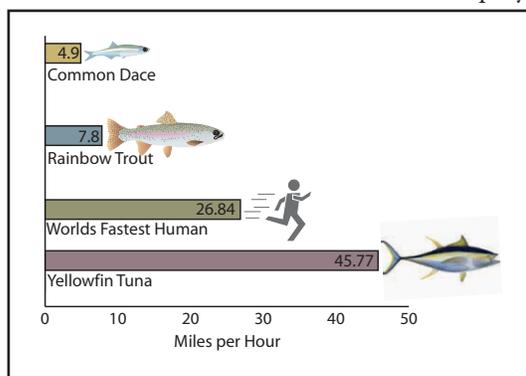
That chunky trout you just hooked feels like he's blazing away from you at a million miles an hour. Fighting this fish, and the accompanying excitement provide the exhilaration we all seek. His reel-screaming runs make your heart race and get you thinking about the integrity of your backing. From an anglers perspective, trout certainly give the impression of incredible speed, but this month we'll take a closer look at just how fast they are and what that means to the average angler.

Trout need to be able to ambush their prey, so a quick burst of speed is necessary when a predator/prey encounter is at hand. If the trout were not able to dart forward faster than their intended prey, they would be an ineffective predator and would not be the game fish we've come to love. The burst speed of a rainbow trout

has been recorded at 11.48 feet/sec, and can only be sustained for a few seconds (Bainbridge, R. 1960). That top speed equates to 7.8 miles per hour, which sounds less impressive than it feels during the fight. That quickness may be fast enough to help outrun would-be

trout predators, and certainly will help it catch prey. A small forage fish that the rainbow might target, the common dace (*Leuciscus leuciscus*), has a burst speed of 7.32 feet/second, or about 4.9 miles per hour. On the other end of the burst speed spectrum, yellowfin tuna have been recorded darting at 67.12 feet per second, which equates to a blistering 45.77 miles per hour! Imagine how the fight might go if trout could burst at that kind of speed.

Many anglers know how piscivorous (fish eating) large brown trout can be, and often fish streamer minnow patterns in an attempt to trigger that genetic response. Their burst speed when attacking prey fish has been documented at similar rates to rainbows. By attacking weak, wounded or unsuspecting preyfish, that short-duration speed burst gives it the necessary advantage to ensure success. As previously mentioned, most of the high-speed runs that trout make are related to predator avoidance, though a prolonged burst often occurs during an angling battle. Their bodies are simply not designed for continuous, fast-paced feeding (unlike tuna), as natural bursts rarely last for more than 10 seconds and are typically just three or four.



SWEETWATER
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Innovation in Fisheries Stewardship and Management

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