

Gaden Trout Hatchery Report

2025 Production Period

Completion of fish production for 25/26 season

December 2025

Climatic Conditions

Rainfall at the start of the breeding period was lacklustre to say the least, with very little rainfall leading into when the trap was deployed into the Thredbo River on the 21st May. Rainfall stayed quite low during the rest of the winter period and into spring. When rain did arrive, it usually came heavily over 2-3 days which inundated the trap with flood water and made trapping fish difficult. Decent rainfalls during spring made the rivers appear to be in good order- unfortunately this did not last over much of the Monaro, with low flows and warm water temperatures creeping in by November. The saving grace for the Thredbo River this year was a decent amount of snowfall over winter which is keeping the river temperature cool pushing into December.

Climatic Data- Gaden Weather Station

Month	Rainfall (mm)	Minimum Temp °C	Maximum Temp °C	Lowest River Level	Maximum River Level
May 2025	51.5	-7	19	.344	1.074
June 2025	83.0	-10	15	.388	1.893
July 2025	53.0	-8	13.5	.485	.968
August 2025	76.5	-7	18	.502	1.857
September 2025	75.5	-5	19	.693	1.700
October 2025	42	-3	26	.657	1.050

Trapping Data

The browns were slow to start pushing into the rivers due to the lack of Rainfall seen across the Monaro at the time. As mentioned, the fish trap was deployed into the Thredbo River a few weeks early (21st May) due to the number of browns sighted into the lower Thredbo between the Perisher bridge and the hatchery picnic grounds. The flows needed for the fish to push further up the system never came, with a lot of Brown Trout seen actively breeding on the redds below the trap. This is great news for Lake Jindabyne with natural river spawning higher than average, hopefully we will see the rewards in a few years! When the river flow did eventually increase, a decent cohort of average sized browns (430mm in length and around 850 grams) pushed into the trap and were stripped of their eggs and milt. A total of **1523** Brown Trout were collected during this spawning event, which is on average for the Thredbo River fish trap. These trapped fish were used to lay down around 400,000 brown trout ova, with around 300,000 ova sent to the Dutton hatchery for release in the northern and central areas. Brown Trout fry releases commenced in October with full allocations completed successfully.

After a decent Rainbow trout run last year, we expected an even better showing for the 2025 spawning run between July- October. Unfortunately, this was not the case, with only **57** Rainbows recorded. There was very little spawning in the lower reaches of the Thredbo River. Unfortunately, due to broodfish decimation by cormorants at Gaden over summer 24/25 we were unable to collect enough ova for the 25/26 stocking season, with stream allocations missing out across the Monaro region. Lakes Jindabyne and Eucumbene will get their full allocation of Rainbow Trout for the 25/26 season.

Infrastructure

The RAS tanks inside the new hatchery building have been an excellent addition, with larger Rainbows grown out for early sub adult releases in the spring (usually would be ready for release until January 2026). These tanks were also used to house broodstock over the hot summer months, where the water temperatures become unsuitable for trout- especially our Brook Trout broodstock.



The RAS tanks in the current hatchery building



A sub adult Rainbow released into Khancoban Pondage



Sub adult Rainbow trout release into Talbingo Dam

Gaden staff have recently travelled to pick up another recirculating aquaculture system (RAS) from Denison College- Bathurst High. These RAS systems were used in their aquaculture program, where students would breed out Brook Trout from fingerlings and then sell them as table fish at the local markets. It was a fantastic initiative and one of the first of its kind in NSW. These aquaculture systems were no longer needed and will be a great asset for both Gaden and Dutton hatcheries. We wish the head of the Aquaculture program Pat Ford congratulations on his new role at Keira High School. Well done Pat and thank you for all you have achieved in the aquaculture industry in NSW.



JJ And Pat with Gaden staff



The RAS system purchased from Bathurst High

Gaden 2.0 Project

Building will commence on the Gaden 2.0 project in January 2026. This project funded by Snowy Hydro, will allow Gaden staff to efficiently grow out salmonid species in four new state of the art RAS systems housed inside the building. These systems effectively control water quality parameters such as temperature and pH, which helps fish grow more efficiently and in a quicker timeframe than the conventional outdoor flow through systems seen at Gaden in the past. The project is due for completion by June 2026.



The new hatchery building planned for completion in June 2026

Fish Stocking

Fish releases have commenced for the 25/26 stocking season, with brown fry being collected by members of the MAS and CSDAC. We thank you for your dedication and assisting staff during this busy period!

Fingerling releases commenced in late December, with Lakes Jindabyne and Eucumbene already receiving around 60,000 Rainbow Trout fingerlings.

Our latest run of Brown Trout should be at fingerling size by February. All Brook trout and Atlantic Salmon releases were completed in November.

All stocking information can be found on the DPI website

<https://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/fishing/recreational/resources/stocking>

Stocks at Hand (as of December 2025)

Atlantic Salmon

Atlantic Salmon	
Age	Number
0+	1500
1+	1500
2+	50
3+	50
4+	0
5+	25

Brook Trout

Brook Trout	
Age	Number
Fingerlings	2000
Broodstock	300

Brown Trout

Brown Trout	
Age	Number
Fingerlings	60,000
Sub-Adults	2000
Broodstock	50

Rainbow Trout

Rainbow Trout	
Age	Number
Fingerlings	250,000
Sub adults	1000
Broodstock	200

Tiger Trout

Tiger Trout	
Age	Number
3+	800

Staffing

2025 saw a new casual position become available, with Courtney Francis taking on this role. Courtney is an active member of the Taralga fishing club and has helped Gaden staff for many years release fish for CSDAC. Welcome Courtney!

I have decided to take some extended leave from the Hatchery Managers position to explore my options elsewhere. I have been working at Gaden since 2016 and have immensely enjoyed my time here working alongside the MAS, CSDAC, CAS and the other fishing clubs and societies with the intent of improving our fishery and giving future generations the opportunity to enjoy it as much as we all have. I want to thank all those that have helped me along the way and I hope to one day see you all on a river somewhere, enjoying some amazing trout fishing!

Paul Sheather will be acting Hatchery Manager from January-June 2026. Paul has been working at the Dutton Hatchery for 33 years, 15 of which as Assistant Manager. He will bring a lot of experience with him and I wish him all the best in his new role.

Kind Regards,

Mitchel Elkins

Hatchery Manager- Gaden Trout Hatchery