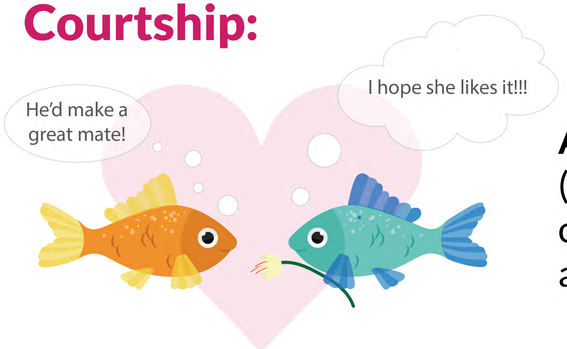
Freshwater Fish Mating and Parental Care

Courtship:

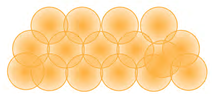


A courtship display is a set of behaviors (like dances, acts of bravery, and displays of beauty) in which an animal attempts to attract a mate.

In fish, courtship displays result in **spawning**, which is the act of releasing gametes in the water.

Gametes are the name for reproductive cells

♀ Female gametes are called **eggs**



♂ Male gametes are called **sperm**

Two Strategies:

Guarders	Non-guarders
Protect their eggs and offspring after spawning by practicing parental care.	Do not protect their eggs and offspring after spawning. Often hide their eggs.

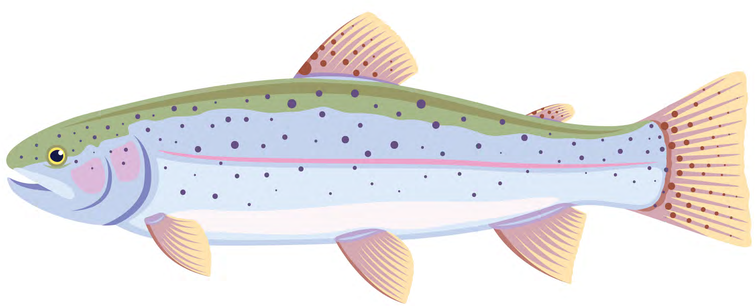
3 different examples

Male Florida flagfish are territorial guarders

During courtship, the female usually makes the first move by reversing her tail towards the side of the male and then they move in a radial fashion (a "T-dance"). This circling dance is repeated several times and results in spawning. Afterwards, the male continuously guards the eggs, chasing predators away, and fanning the eggs with his fins to keep the eggs clean and aerated.

Japanese rice fish are non-guarding open substrate spawners

After the female deposits her eggs and they are fertilized by the male, the eggs will remain attached to the female's belly. As she swims around and comes into contact with water plants, the eggs will attach to the plants.



Rainbow trout are non-guarding brood hiders

Before spawning, the female digs a nest with her tail in gravel. These nests are called redds. The female then lays her eggs while the male fertilizes them, while both fish defend the redd if necessary from other members of the same species. Then the female buries the redd, and the nest site is abandoned.