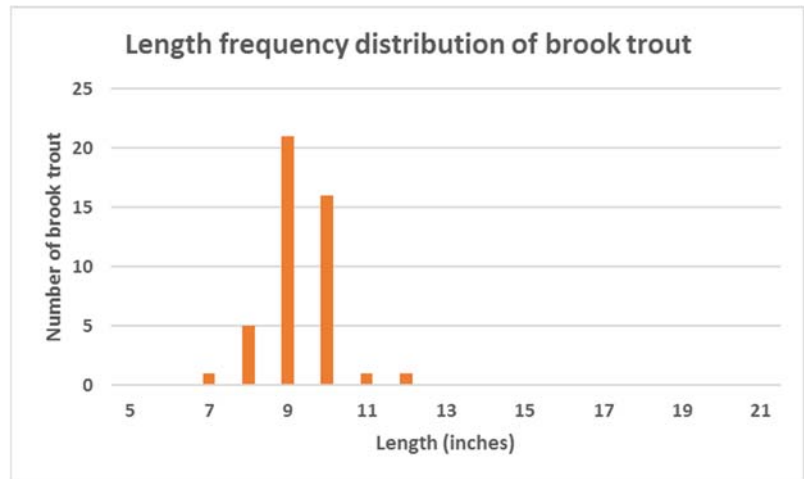


Bennett Lake Brook Trout Survey (Survey #: 517034)
Jonathan Fieroh, Region 5 Fisheries

08/03/2018

Bennett Lake (UH-P182) is a remote 37-acre lake in the Wilcox Lake Wild Forest of Hamilton County. This water was reclaimed in 1954 and has been stocked with fingerling brook trout since 1955; it was last surveyed in 2003. The annual stocking policy is 2,000 Temiscamie x Domestic hybrid fingerling brook trout. The acidity level of Bennett Lake has not been problematic and the 2017 survey found a pH of 6.8 and an Acid Neutralizing Capacity of 31. The lake has a maximum depth of 28 feet and there is abundant dissolved oxygen throughout the water column, though much of the lake is less than 10 feet deep. The lake has a special fishing regulation prohibiting the use or possession of baitfish (6 NYCRR §10.6 (g) (3)).

On June 19th, 2017, three 150-ft Swedish experimental gill nets, a 30-ft minnow net and a minnow trap were set overnight. A total of 45 brook trout were collected during the survey (Table 1), indicating that brook trout survival is adequate. However, few large brook trout were caught; no fish age 3 or older were collected. The average length of an age 1 brook trout was only 7.8 inches and the average length of a 2-year-old was 10.1 inches. This mediocre brook trout growth can likely be attributed to the presence of competing nonnative fish species, most notably golden shiner.



Golden shiners were first documented post-reclamation in a 1987 ALSC survey. In 2017 a total of 20 golden shiners was collected, but this may not accurately portray their relative abundance, as large numbers of golden shiners were observed in the shallows.

Table 1: Total number and length ranges of fish species collected at Bennett Lake, 2017.

Species	Number collected	Minimum length (inches)	Maximum length (inches)
Brook trout	45	7.0	12.2
Golden shiner	20	3.3	4.8
Fathead minnow	3	2.3	3.4

To improve the growth rate of brook trout in Bennett Lake, the stocking policy will be reduced to 1,250 Temiscamie x Domestic hybrid brook trout fingerlings annually. Bennett Lake is a viable



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reclamation candidate and should be reclaimed once an improved fish barrier is constructed. The Wilcox Lake Wild Forest Unit Management Plan is currently being drafted, and the required bedrock barrier enhancement will be addressed in that plan. Because of the planned reclamation, the special fishing regulation prohibiting the use or possession of baitfish should be retained.

