

Rondout Creek Experimental Trout Stocking (Survey #: 319014)
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Rondout Creek, a tributary to the Hudson River, supports a diverse fishery from its origin in the Catskill Mountains to its confluence with the Hudson River in Kingston, NY. The section below Rondout Reservoir to Honk Lake near Kerhonkson is primarily considered a quality trout fishery. This section receives a cold-water discharge from Rondout Reservoir which provides trout a thermal refuge during summer months. Currently, a stocking policy of 1,850 yearling and 240 two-year-old domestic strain brown trout are stocked in this section on an annual basis. During the spring of 2018, an experimental split stocking occurred of domestic strain brown trout and a hybrid strain (domestic x wild) brown trout. All trout received a fin clip to determine survivability of each strain. Backpack electrofishing occurred at four locations during August of 2018 to sample for composition of stocked trout at the time of the survey. Only six stocked trout were encountered with five of these fish having a fin clip of the hybrid strain brown trout. The other stocked trout caught had no fin clip, and no brown trout caught had a domestic strain fin clip. Domestic and hybrid strain brown trout were again stocked during 2019, and electrofishing was conducted on 8/22/19 and 8/23/19 at similar sites which were sampled during 2018. All brown trout stocked in 2019 had a fin clip as follows: 742 hybrid brown trout with a right ventral (RV) fin clip, 258 domestic brown trout with a RV fin clip and 1,000 domestic strain brown trout with a left ventral fin clip. Barge electrofishing gear was used for this 2019 survey, and 2,446 feet of stream was sampled.

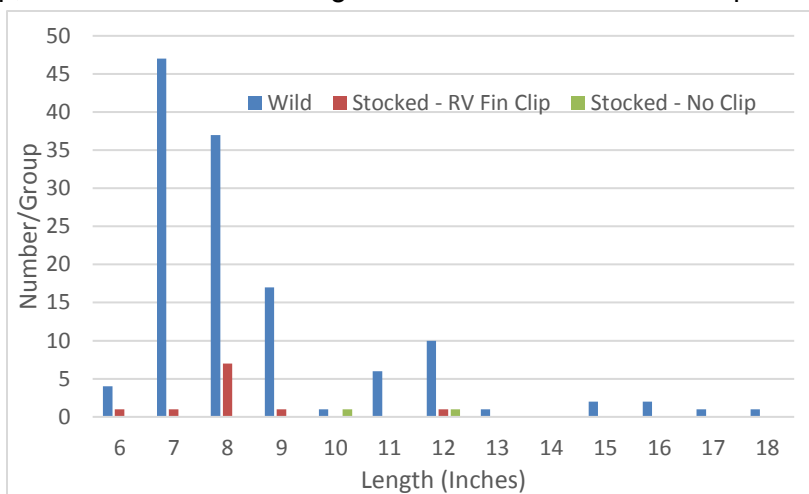


Figure 1. Length distribution of adult brown trout caught during 2019 electrofishing.

A total of 451 brown trout were caught with only 13 of which determined to be of hatchery origin. Of the stocked brown trout caught, eleven had RV fin clips with the remaining two showing no indication of a fin clip. Ten of the brown trout with RV clips appeared to be yearlings and stocked during 2019. These fish had a mean length of 8.1 inches (Figure 1). One brown trout with a RV clip appeared to be a holdover two-year-old and was 12.8 inches long. Wild brown trout accounted for 94% of the total trout catch. Ninety-three (43%) of the 202 wild brown trout caught were determined to be young of year. Of the adult (>5 inches) wild brown trout caught, most (65%) were 7 – 9 inches long, while six wild brown trout caught were 15 inches or larger (Figure 1).

Based on the results from August 2018 and 2019, It appears the survivability of the stocked domestic strain brown trout through late summer is minimal in this section of Rondout Creek. While it’s possible that some of the RV clipped brown trout caught during 2019 could be domestic strain, it seems unlikely as zero left ventral clip (domestic strain) brown trout were caught during this survey. Results from the last two years clearly indicate that stocked hybrid brown trout survive much better than the stocked domestic strain in this section of Rondout Creek. Additionally, wild brown trout abundance appears to be good and should be fully evaluated within the next few years. It’s recommended a full population estimate be conducted in this section of Rondout Creek to evaluate our current stocking policy.

