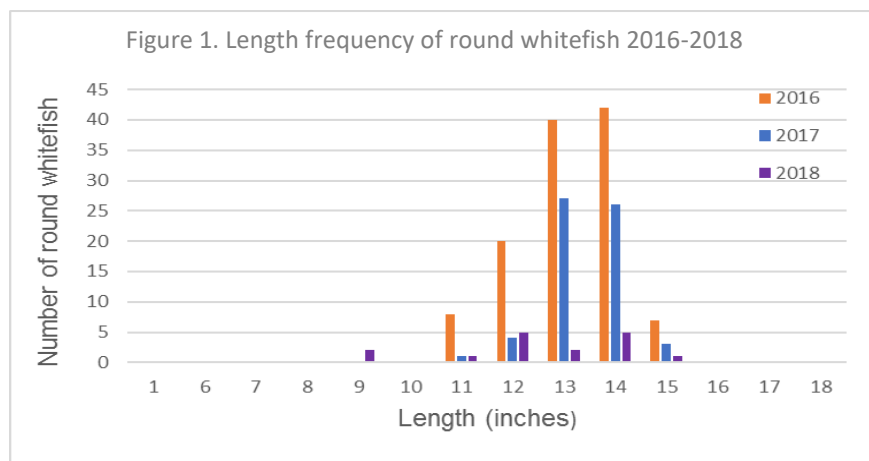


## Little Green Pond Round Whitefish General Biological Survey #519024: Jonathan Fieroh, Region 5 Fisheries

12/20/2019

Little Green (C-P192) is a 68-acre water bordering both the Saranac Lakes Wild Forest and the St. Regis Canoe Area in Franklin County. It is part of the Adirondack Fish Hatchery administrative area and fishing is prohibited (6 NYCRR 10.3 (b) (17) (f)). It has a maximum depth of 46 feet, an average depth of 18.4 feet, a pH of 7.3, with an ANC of 158  $\mu\text{eq/L}$  and a conductivity of 29  $\mu\text{Sc/m}$ . Groundwater input seems likely as the silica value is a relatively high (5.5 mg/L) and because the pond's outlet discharge exceeds its tributary inflows. Little Green Pond has a complicated management history and has been reclaimed four times including in 1963, 1991, 1999, and 2003. Recent management efforts have focused primarily on endangered round whitefish and the pond has been used as an egg source in the ongoing recovery effort for this species.

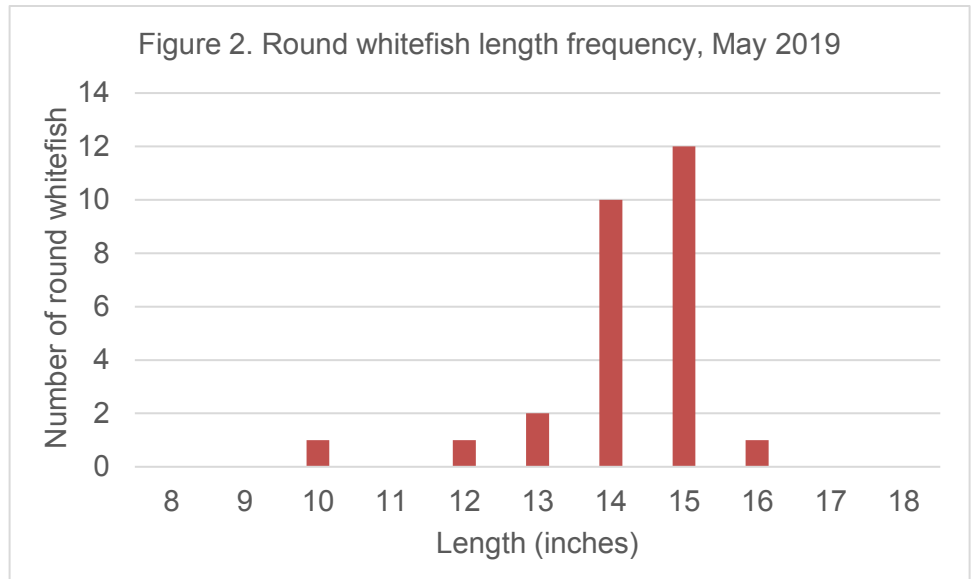
The 2019 survey was undertaken in an attempt to explain the reduced catches of round whitefish during the Adirondack Hatchery's fall egg-takes in 2017 and 2018 (Survey #518090). The decrease in the number of round whitefish collected since 2016 in these trap-net surveys was alarming, declining yearly from 117 to 61 to 16, respectively (Figure 1.). The reason for this decline was unclear but there appeared to be several possibilities. One possibility was that there was a real reduction in the population size due to aging



out of the initial stocked year classes, another possibility was emigration. A third possibility was simply that the population was intact but that round whitefish were simply not being effectively caught in the trap nets during the egg takes of 2017 and 2018. To test this third possibility short term gill net sets were made following the methods described by Steinhardt et al. 2007.

On 5/19/2019 two 1.5" mesh gill nets were set, and both were tended after one hour or less. A total of 28 round whitefish were collected in that time so the survey was cut short to prevent possible mortality (Figure 2.). A May 2005 survey (#505939) collected 25 round whitefish using 6 nets and a similar one-hour protocol for sampling. Round whitefish in the 2019 survey averaged 14.7 inches in length. It appears that, at least for now, the population appears relatively robust but capturing the fish for an egg-take can be problematic. Round whitefish can spawn quite late in the year, around the time or even after significant ice forms. A mechanical "ice-eater" has been used in Little Green Pond to extend the ability to use trap-nets but how this may change the effectiveness of the gear is unknown.

Continued round whitefish stocking is critical for this water's feral round whitefish population, which will likely continue as an important egg-source supporting ongoing species restoration efforts. However, to minimize potential hatchery influences, management efforts to encourage successful natural reproduction should continue.



Literature Cited:

Steinhart, G.B., M. Mineau and C.E. Kraft. 2007. Status and recovery of round whitefish (*Prosopium cylindraceum*) in New York USA. Final report to State Wildlife Grant T-3-1, NYSDEC, Bureau of Wildlife, Albany, NY. 59 pp.