

Black Pond General Biological Survey #519038:
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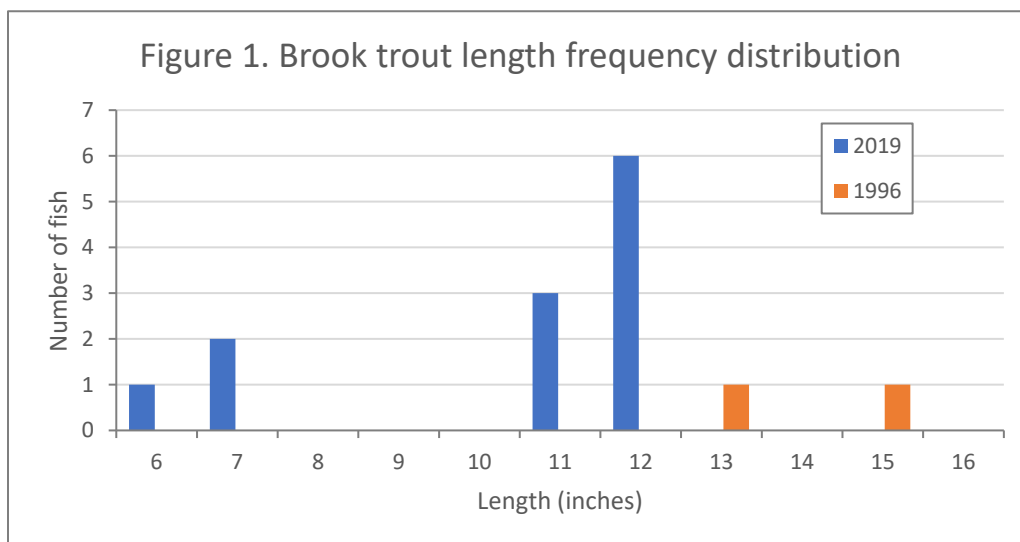
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Black Pond (UH389) is a small (five acres), though relatively deep (28 feet) pond in the Town of Minerva in Essex County. The pond is in the Upper Hudson watershed and is located northeast of Hewitt Pond. The pond is completely contained by the Vanderwhacker Mountain Wild Forest, assuring public access. Getting to the pond entails a bushwhack if coming from Hewitt; anglers may find informal trails off of the Minerva Stream trail if coming from the East. However, it requires a fair amount of effort to reach the pond from either direction. The pond was last surveyed in 1996, though that was not a complete netting, and only two fish were caught. Therefore, the purpose of the present survey was to get a full biological assessment with a focus on the brook trout population. The pond currently has a stocking policy of fall fingerling Temiscamie X Domestic hybrid brook trout.

The pond was surveyed in June 2019 using our standard suite of sampling gear: 150' experimental gill net, 30' minnow net and a metal minnow trap. A total of three fish species were caught in the 2019 survey (Table 1.). The pond was thought to be a brook trout monoculture; the other two species had not been previously documented. The 1996 catch (Figure 1.) was limited to two brook trout.

Table 1. Numbers caught and size ranges of fish from Black Pond in 2019.

Species	Number caught	Length range (in)
Brook trout	12	6.3 – 12.4
Fathead minnow	26	1.7 – 2.6
Brown bullhead	26	3.3 – 5.5



Water chemistry values were very good with a pH of 6.8 and an acid neutralizing capacity of 56 $\mu\text{eq/L}$. Water samples from two depths (five and 18 feet) were also analyzed for silica and sodium levels. Silica values were 1.45 and 3.06 mg/L at the respective depths; sodium was 0.65 and 0.67 mg/L.

The scarcity of previous data for Black Pond makes it difficult to say with certainty, but the pond appears to have suffered a decline in its brook trout fishery. The presence of new competitors, along with angler reports, lends credence to this theory. In the short term, management recommendation is to maintain the current stocking policy and periodically resurvey the pond to monitor the brook trout population and species composition. A reclamation with rotenone may be considered in the longer term, but a fish barrier dam on the outlet would first need to be constructed. Black Pond is subject to Statewide Angling Regulations, except that the use of baitfish is prohibited, and that will continue.