

Klondike Brook General Biological Survey #519086:
Tom Shanahan, Region 5 Fisheries

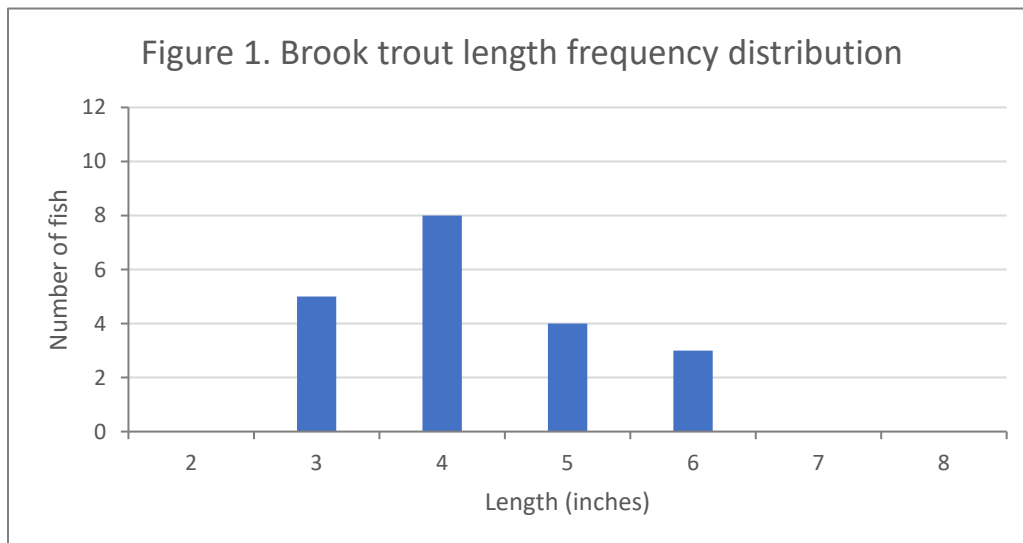
04/08/2020

Klondike Brook (C-25-26-41-1) is a small stream in the Town of North Elba in Essex County. The brook originates in the high terrain on the north side of Phelps Mountain and is completely within the High Peaks Wilderness Area. Public access is from foot trails that begin in the South Meadow area. The brook flows into South Meadow Brook which then drains into the West Branch of the Ausable River as part of the Champlain watershed. This was the first survey since 1929, so this was a general sampling to get baseline information and is also part of a larger effort to look at the distribution of wild brook trout in the Ausable system.

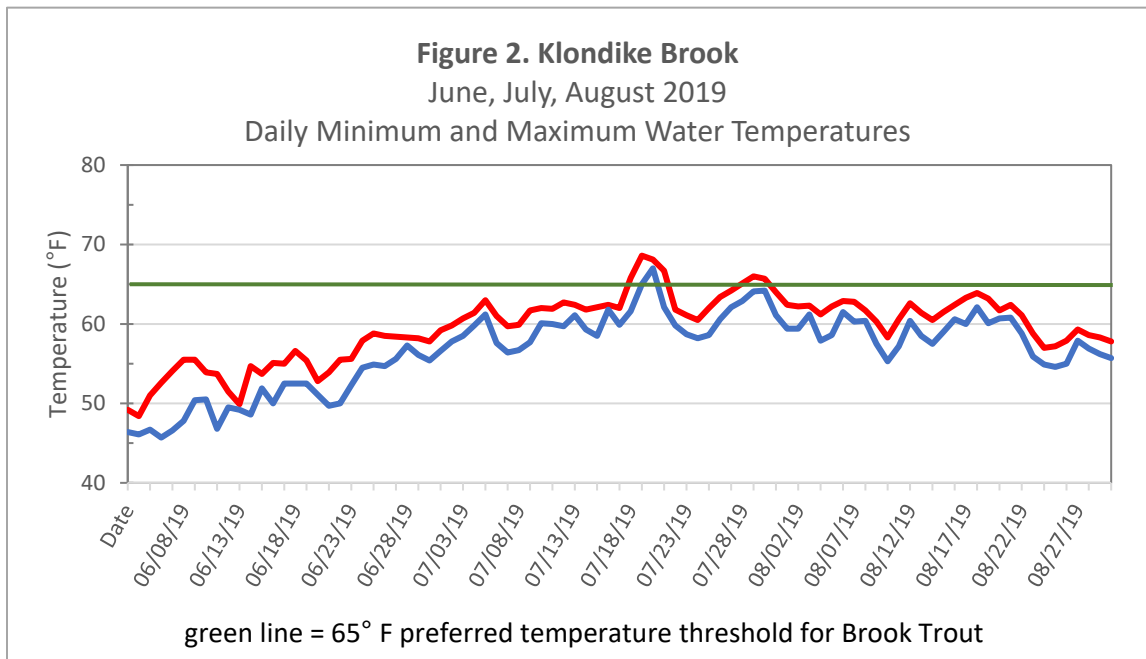
We sampled a single site, at the first trail crossing above the mouth, with a backpack electrofishing unit in September 2019. The brook was about 12 feet wide in the 275-foot section that we surveyed. There was good overhead tree cover and the brook featured numerous step pools among its cobble and boulder substrate. We captured 20 wild brook trout along with blacknose dace and slimy sculpin (Table 1.); this is a common species assemblage for small brook trout streams in the Adirondacks. Although the fish were not very large, the length frequency chart (Figure 1.) is characteristic of a low-productivity mountain brook.

Table 1. Numbers caught and size ranges of fish from Klondike Brook in 2019.

Species	Number caught	Length range (inches)
brook trout	20	2.8 – 6.4
blacknose dace	2	2.7 – 2.9
slimy sculpin	4	1.1 – 2.8



Klondike Brook had exceptional water temperatures in 2019 (Figure 2.), as revealed by a temperature recorder in place at the sampling location for the summer months. The brook never reached 70 °F and was almost always cooler than 65 °F. We have not documented many streams with a better temperature profile.



Although we don't have recent data for Klondike Brook to allow comparisons through time, the current survey shows a very good brook trout stream with natural reproduction. No stocking or other management is needed at this time. Klondike Brook is governed by Statewide Angling Regulations and that will continue. We will periodically resurvey the brook to assess water temperatures and species composition.