

Cayadutta Creek Trout Survey (Survey #417039)
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Cayadutta Creek (H-240-89) travels south through the cities of Gloversville and Johnstown in Fulton County, eventually emptying into the Mohawk River in the city of Fonda in Region 4's Montgomery County. The total length of the stream is 19.9 miles with the majority in Fulton County. Cayadutta Creek is one of the more important brown trout fisheries in Fulton county because it flows through these two major population centers. The Cayadutta has undergone a renaissance of sorts. When the leather industry in Gloversville and Johnstown was active, the creek was the site of numerous fish-kills and poor water quality. However, with the decline in the leather industry and improvements in municipal waste water treatment, the stream has made a comeback, and now hosts an excellent brown trout population.

DEC Region 5 Fisheries was requested to survey the brown trout in the stream downstream of the Johnstown City waste water treatment facility. The idea of designating this area as a catch and release trout fishing stream was proposed by local anglers who circulated a petition on "moveon.org", in part because they reported good catches of large brown trout that they thought vulnerable to overharvest. In addition, they had raised concerns regarding the safety of trout for consumption based on the stream's industrial past, and the Department of Health requested we sample fish downstream of the sewage treatment plant outflow for contaminant testing.

Much of the stream in Fulton County below the treatment facility is exposed bedrock with steep slopes. Because some potential survey locations were in Montgomery County, Region 4 staff participated in the survey. Water conditions at the time of the late July survey were not optimal; flows were up and turbidity was higher than normal. Three back pack shocking units set at 165 volts DC, 3.2 amps and a pulse rate of 30 Hz, along with 4 scappers were used to conduct the survey. Two sites with pool-riffle-run components were selected that totaled 750 and 1,100 feet in length. The two sites had maximum depths of 5.1 ft and 4.3 ft, with average depths of 1.9 ft and 1.6 ft.

A total of 10 brown trout were captured during the survey ranging in length from 9 – 11 inches (Figure 1). All trout collected were stocked fish that likely came from stocking points in Sammonsville, approximately 1 mile upstream. All 10 fish were kept for toxic substance sampling to update the fish consumption advisory. A few larger brown trout were observed during the survey, but due to the high-water conditions many fish were missed. Other species collected or observed during the survey included white sucker, cutlip minnow, Eastern blacknose dace, longnose dace, creek chub and rock bass.



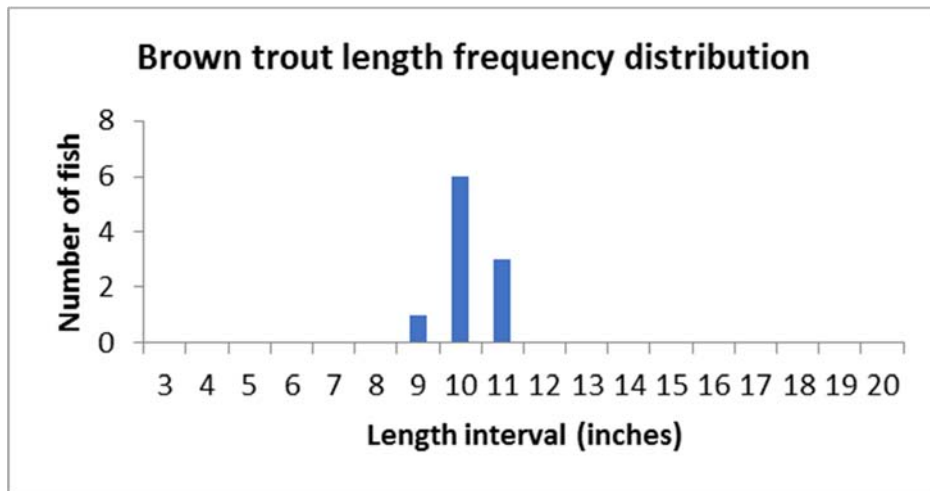


Figure 1. Length frequency distribution of brown trout from Cayadutta Creek, 2017.

Due to the lack of public access, it was decided that no stocking locations would be established in the Region 4 portions of the stream that were surveyed. Also, the proposed catch and release designation of this section of stream was not deemed suitable due to the lack of public access. Cayadutta Creek will continue to be managed as a brown trout stream in Region 5 with an annual stocking of 2,100 spring yearling and 400 two-year-old brown trout. The stream is a good candidate for the acquisition of Public Fishing Rights if resources allow in the future.