

Queer Lake General Biological Survey #521043

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Queer Lake (R-P329) is a remote 142-acre lake in the Pigeon Lake Wilderness of Hamilton County. It was last surveyed by the Adirondack Lakes Survey Corporation (ALSC) 35 years ago, in 1986. Lake trout were stocked several times between 1894 and 1933 and brook trout were first stocked in 1934. Queer Lake is currently stocked with 2,200 fingerling brook trout annually. The maximum depth is 70 feet, the mean depth is 35.8 feet, and dissolved oxygen sufficient for trout was present throughout the water column. No chemistry sample was drawn for analysis during this survey as there is an abundance of chemistry information for this water. Queer Lake is part of the Long-Term Monitoring project of the ALSC. Acid/base chemistry is not an issue here as relatively recent pH values have all been above pH 6 with ANC values generally above 20 $\mu\text{eq/L}$.

In early July of 2021, five 150-foot Swedish experimental gill nets, a 30-foot minnow net, and a minnow trap were set overnight. A total of 11 lake trout, and only five brook trout were collected, despite the fact they were specifically targeted during the survey. Lake trout lengths ranged from 10.8 to 20.5 inches. Lake trout now account for most of the game fish here, and they are of a nice size for a remote

Adirondack water, with most individuals collected in excess of 17 inches long. On the other hand, the brook trout catch was quite disappointing, with an average of only one brook trout taken per experimental gill net set. The salmonid ages (as determined by scale analysis) showed that the length at age for lake trout was good. A 6-year-old lake trout averaged 19.6 inches in length, and ages 3 through 7 were collected during the survey.

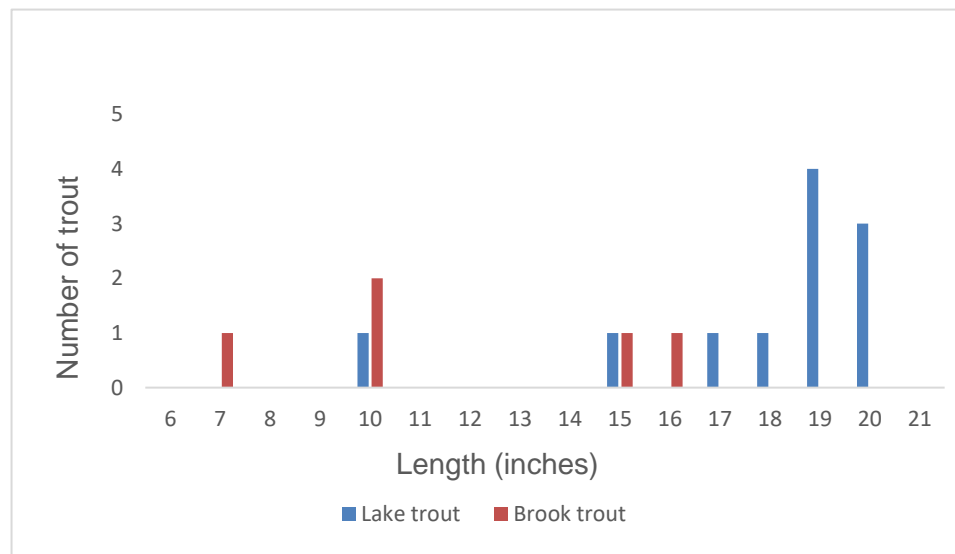


Figure 1. Length frequency of lake and brook trout, Queer Lake 2021.

In addition to the two species of salmonids, five additional species were collected. White suckers accounted for much of the fish biomass in the 2021 survey even though only two white suckers were collected during the 1986 ALSC survey. Brown bullhead, golden shiner, pumpkinseed, and creek chub were also collected (Table 1). Queer Lake appears to have lost native species such as lake chub and northern redbelly dace, as well as non-native species such as fathead minnow and banded killifish between the 1933 and 1986 surveys.



Table 1. Number and length ranges of fish collected at Queer Lake, 2021.

Species	Number collected	Minimum length (in)	Maximum length (in)
Lake trout	11	10.8	20.5
Brook trout	5	7.9	16.4
White sucker	43	9.8	21.7
Brown bullhead	26	3.1	7.0
Golden shiner	68	3.1	4.6
Pumpkinseed	22	1.9	5.0
Creek chub	11	3.0	5.9

The poor survival of the 2,200 stocked Temiscamie x Domestic brook trout fingerlings no longer warrants continuation of the stocking policy and this policy should be discontinued. Perhaps this lack of performance is being driven by the burgeoning white sucker population as suckers are a serious competitor for brook trout. The naturally reproducing lake trout population appears to be doing relatively well given current conditions in the lake and this population may continue to grow. Queer Lake should be resurveyed in five years to monitor the status of the lake trout population.