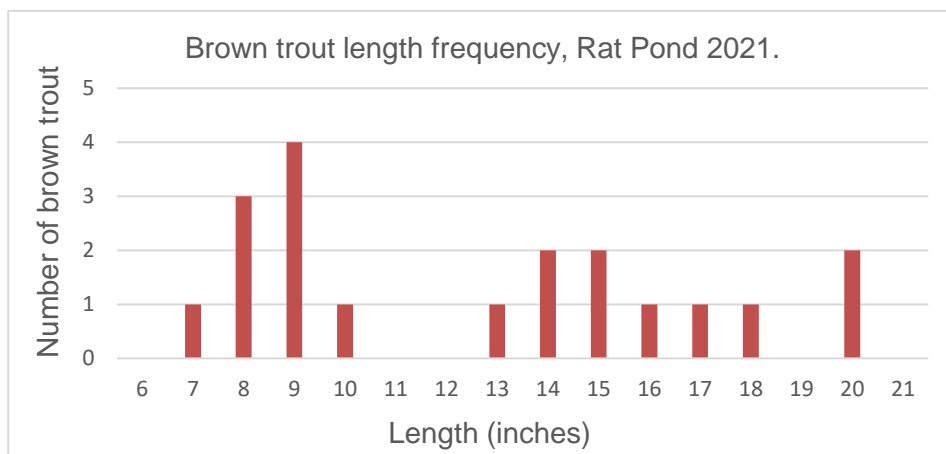


Rat Pond General Biological Survey #521037
Jonathan Fieroh, Region 5 Fisheries

2/8/2022

Rat Pond (C-P186) is an 88-acre water located in Franklin County in the Saranac Lakes Wild Forest. The maximum depth is 29-feet, the average depth is 12-feet, and there was adequate dissolved oxygen for trout to a depth of 13 feet in this mid-July survey. The last fish survey was performed in 1994. Water samples were not drawn for chemical analysis here as acid/base chemistry is not problematic for this water. Rat Pond was reclaimed in 1966 and brown trout have been stocked annually since 1990. Brown trout were deemed superior to brook trout for this water as several species that are problematic for brook trout are present, including golden shiner and rainbow smelt.

This fish survey was primarily undertaken to evaluate the current stocking policy for brown trout. In mid-July of 2021, two Swedish experimental gill nets, a 30-foot minnow net, and a minnow trap were set overnight. A total 19 brown trout were collected, and their lengths ranged from 7.9 to 20.6 inches. The average length of a brown trout from Rat Pond was 13.1 inches. A subset of brown trout was aged using scale analysis, and their growth and condition appeared to be good. Ages 1 through 6 were represented in the survey.



Several additional fish species were also collected including golden shiner, fathead minnow and northern redbelly dace. A single rainbow smelt was collected in each of the 1984 ALSC and 1994 (#594097) surveys, and a single white sucker was taken in the 1984 ALSC survey, but neither species was collected in 2021. Northern redbelly dace was collected here for the first time. It should be noted that most of the golden shiners collected during the survey were quite large.

Table 1. Number and length ranges of fish collected at Rat Pond, 2021.

Species	Number collected	Minimum length (in)	Maximum length (in)
Brown trout	19	7.9	20.6
Golden shiner	48	2.6	7.9
Fathead minnow	42	1.9	2.8
Northern redbelly dace	152	2.0	3.3

Brown trout stocking is providing a very nice and heavily used fishery here. The stocking of 600 spring yearling brown trout annually should continue.

