

Rock Pond General Biological Survey (Survey #:517058)

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Rock Pond (SL-P196)) is a remote 27-acre water in the High Peaks Wilderness in Franklin County. It has a maximum depth of 36 feet, but little dissolved oxygen below 15 feet, leaving only a relatively narrow band of suitable temperature and oxygen for brook trout in summer. Acidity is not an issue in Rock Pond and in 2017 the pH was 6.89 units. Rock Pond was reclaimed in 1951 and has been stocked with brook trout since that time. Because of its location within the High Peaks Wilderness, the use and possession of baitfish is prohibited by the Wilderness Unit-wide regulation in 6 NYCRR §10.6 (e) (1). The last fisheries survey was performed by Adirondack Lake Survey Corporation in 1986. Brook trout, golden shiner, creek chub, white sucker and brown bullhead were present at that time.

In August 2017, two 150-foot Swedish experimental gill nets, a 30-foot minnow net, and a minnow trap were set overnight to assess the fish population. The survey did not collect creek chub or golden shiner but two new species, pumpkinseed and yellow perch, were collected (Table 1).

Table 1: Species, number collected, and total length ranges for fish collected at Rock Pond, 2017.

Species	Number collected	Minimum length (in)	Maximum length (in)
Brook trout	3	10.9	11.4
Yellow perch	37	5.9	14.3
Brown bullhead	73	5.6	7.8
White sucker	33	11.3	17.6
Pumpkinseed	1	4.7	4.7

Only 3 brook trout in poor condition were collected while brown bullhead numbers appear to have increased. The now established yellow perch population consisted of mostly small yellow perch that appeared to be stunted, although 2 large individuals were also collected. The current annual stocking policy of 1300 Temiscamie x Domestic hybrid brook trout fingerlings will be discontinued due to the poor survival and performance of brook trout in this pond.

Unfortunately, the pond is no longer considered to be a viable reclamation candidate because of the presence of large wetlands. As a result, the stocking policy will shift to 650 spring yearling brown trout. Brown trout should fare better given the competing species present in this water. The performance of the brown trout should be evaluated in a repeat survey after several years of stocking.