

Unknown Pond Brook Trout Survey (Survey #: 517081)
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Unknown Pond (UH-P658) is a remote 35-acre water in Hamilton County located within the Blue Mountain Wild Forest. Its outlet empties into the Cedar River some 1.1 mi downstream. It has been stocked every year with brook trout fingerlings since 1942 and was last surveyed in 1979. Currently, it is stocked with 1400 Temiscamie x Domestic hybrid brook trout fingerlings every fall. Unknown Pond has a maximum depth of 26 ft, but summertime brook trout habitat is limited as little dissolved oxygen is present below 12 ft. Acidity is not currently an issue in Unknown Pond and the 2017 survey found a pH of 7.67 and an ANC of 278. The pond also has a special regulation prohibiting the use or possession of baitfish (6 NYCRR 10.6 (g) (4)). This survey was undertaken to assess the pond’s fish population and performance of the stocked fish.

On September 5th, 2017, three 150-foot Swedish experimental gill nets, a 30-foot minnow net and a minnow trap were set overnight.

A total of 9 brook trout were collected during the survey, none exceeding 10 inches long (Table 1). The average brook trout length was 8.8 in and the average weight was 0.26 lbs. The relatively poor growth and survival of brook trout is likely due to the lack of suitable summer habitat and the abundance of competing fish species. Northern redbelly dace was added to the list of species present, but common shiners, which had previously been documented, were not collected in 2017.

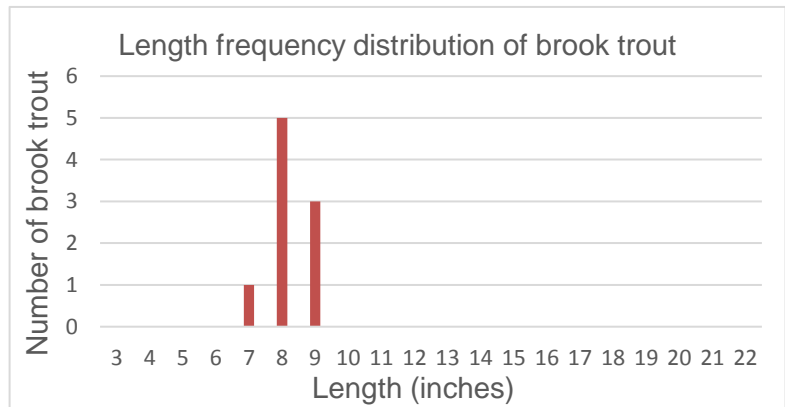


Table 1. Species, total number and length ranges of fish collected at Unknown Pond, September 2017.

Species	Number collected	Minimum length (in)	Maximum length (in)
Brook trout	9	7.8	9.8
White sucker	69	4.1	14.6
Brown bullhead	37	3.3	13.8
Redbreast sunfish	49	2.0	8.1
Pumpkinseed	80	1.6	7.2
Creek chub	26	2.4	8.2
Golden shiner	13	3.3	8.2
Northern redbelly dace	26	1.8	2.6
Fathead minnow	3	1.9	2.0



The pond is not a viable reclamation candidate because of the presence of a 60-acre wetland on its outlet, a 35-acre wetland on its inlet and the absence of a suitable location to construct a fish barrier dam on its outlet. Because yellow perch are not present and some nonnative species present in the Cedar River are not yet present in Unknown Pond (e.g. rock and smallmouth bass), it is appropriate to maintain the special regulation prohibiting use and possession of baitfish. Due to the relatively poor performance of stocked brook trout, they will be replaced with an annual stocking of 750 spring yearling brown trout. Brown trout may perform better given the current limnological and fish community conditions limiting brook trout performance.