

Gibbs Lake Brook Trout Survey (Survey #: 619613)

Eric C. Maxwell, David Erway, Region 6 Fisheries

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Gibbs Lake is a 36-acre lake with a maximum depth of 12 feet that is located in the Town of Webb, Herkimer County. The Adirondack Lake Survey Corporation survey of 1985 documented a small population of wild brook trout. In an effort to increase the recreational fishery, Gibbs Lake has been stocked with fall fingerling Horn Lake strain brook trout annually since 2007. The stocked fish received an adipose fin clip to differentiate them from wild fish in future surveys.

In 2012 and 2019, we conducted gill net surveys to assess the wild brook trout population and survival of stocked trout. In July 2019, three Redden gill nets were set at depths ranging from 3.8 – 9.4 feet and a uniform temperature from surface to bottom of 74°F was recorded. Previous biological surveys conducted by DEC occurred in 2005 and 2006. In 2012, no brook trout were caught; however, during the 2019 survey eight unclipped wild brook trout were caught but no stocked clipped brook trout were caught. Other species documented in 2019 were white sucker, brown bullhead, pumpkinseed, and fathead minnows. Surveys conducted in 2005 also documented northern redbelly dace, creek chub, and golden shiners. We aged six wild brook trout from this survey and all were age 2 and between 7.9 and 11.0 inches total length.

The apparent poor survival of stocked fingerling brook trout is likely attributable to warm summer water temperatures. The lowest water temperature recorded during this survey was 74°F. No bass, pike, or other large piscivorous fish species have been found in the lake that would indicate a high predation risk to fingerling brook trout. It appears that the wild brook trout population can persist despite the marginal habitat. Based on the closure of the nearest road to vehicle traffic, lack of well-worn trails leading to the lake from the road, and absence of any anthropogenic debris in or adjacent to the lake, angler exploitation is not a likely source of mortality. Due to these factors, we recommend that stocking be discontinued for this lake.

Literature Cited

Adirondack Lakes Survey Corporation. "ALSC Historic Data for GIBBS LAKE (040684)." 29 May 1985, www.adirondacklakessurvey.org/alscscript.inc.php?alscpond=040684&pname=GIBBS LAKE.

