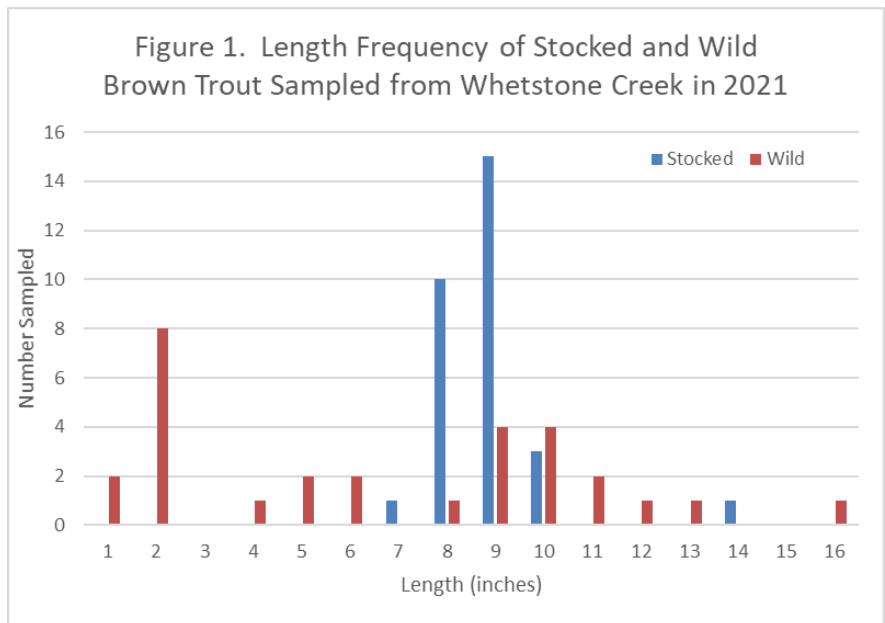


Whetstone Creek CROTS Survey (Survey #: 621006)
 Les Resseguie, Region 6 Fisheries

6/3/2022

Whetstone Creek (ONT-19-59) is a 12.9-mile-long tributary to the Black River in the Towns of Martinsburg, Grieg, and West Turin (Lewis County). This stream is classified as C, C(T) and B(T) by NYSDEC Division of Water (i.e., suitable for fishing and trout present). NYSDEC has a 1.5-mile inland trout stream stocked reach defined as “From Blue Street upstream to Glendale Road”, with an annual stocking policy of 300 yearling brown trout. Public access is available through 0.91 miles of Public Fishing Rights (PFR) downstream of the stocked reach, and through landowner permission within the stocked reach. The fishing regulation for trout is an open season of April 1 – October 15, a daily creel of five fish with no more than two over 12 inches; and an October 16 – March 31 catch and release, artificial lures only season. Current angling effort is unknown yet is likely low.

In June 2021, a Catch Rate Oriented Trout Stocking (CROTS) survey was conducted at three sites within the stocked reach. Whetstone Creek was last sampled using the CROTS methodology in 2006. The current survey was conducted to evaluate the current status of the stream and trout population, and to determine the appropriate management category for current conditions as outlined in the New York State Trout Stream Management Plan (TSMP; NYSDEC 2020).



Using backpack electrofishing, three sites were surveyed along the Whetstone Creek stocked reach in June, 2021. A total of 59 brown trout (30 stocked and 29 wild) ranging from one to 16 inches were collected (Figure 1) along with other fish species common to the area (Table 1). Determination of origin (stocked vs. wild) was made by size and field observations of deformed or eroded fins. Using data collected in 2021, the CROTS model estimated Whetstone Creek to currently have a wild trout biomass of 68.7 lbs/acre and a wild trout yearling and older density of 69.3 fish/acre (142 fish/mile). Wild trout biomass estimates meet the criteria for the Wild Quality management category, but due to the lack of formal public access it is recommended to continue manage this reach as Stocked according to the TSMP. A temperature logger set to capture hourly temperature data from July through September was deployed following this survey to better understand trout habitat within Whetstone Creek. This data can be viewed at [SHEDS Stream Temperature Database \(ecosheds.org\)](https://ecosheds.org).



A stream must have a minimum of 75 angler hours/acre/year to meet the criteria for the Stocked Management Category according to the TSMP. An angler survey on this stocked reach is needed to verify annual angling effort meets these criteria. We recommend that the stream classification be upgraded from (T) to (TS) (i.e., Trout Present to Trout Spawning) given the capture of young of year trout. We also recommend pursuing formal public access (i.e., PFR) or cooperative agreements to allow the public to access the stocked reach. Two separate landowners indicated that they provide public fishing access upon request, but that is subject to change if land ownership changes. Purchasing PFR within this reach would ensure angling opportunities for future generations and could allow for upgrading this reach to the Wild-Quality Management Category.

Table 1. Fish species and numbers collected during the 2021 Whetstone Creek CROTS Survey.

Common Name	Number
Burbot	20
Brown Trout	59 (30 stocked, 29 wild)
Common Shiner	27
Creek Chub	54
Eastern Blacknose Dace	377
Fantail Darter	2
Fathead Minnow	1
Golden Shiner	7
Green Sunfish	1
Longnose Dace	54
Margined Madtom	15
Northern Hog Sucker	13
White Sucker	74

Literature Cited

NYSDEC. 2020. *New York State Trout Stream Management Plan*. Albany, NY: New York State Department of Environmental Conservation.