

North Branch Salmon River CROTS Survey (Survey #718034)

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On September 12th and 14th 2019 the Region 7 Fisheries staff completed a survey to assess the survival of stocked trout (CROTS survey) on the North Branch of the Salmon River. There have been two Eastern Brook Trout Joint Venture surveys done since the only other CROTS survey was completed in early July 1992. The justification for the survey was the 25+ year gap in CROTS surveys as well as angler observations of declining trout populations.

We completed four electrofishing runs, with only two trout being captured (both at site 1). There were numerous other fish species present, with blacknose dace being by far the most numerous (434 individuals), particularly at the most upstream site (#4). Other abundant species included mottled sculpin (98 fish), fantail darter (48), and cutlips minnow (45). Brook trout were noticeably absent from the 2018 survey, while they were somewhat abundant in 1992 (Table 1). Brown trout were present in three of the four sites in 1992, compared to one site in 2018. The angler observations appear to accurately reflect the decreased trout abundance in the river.

The stream has been significantly impacted by recent flood events and merganser predation is also a likely culprit for the low trout catches. Bank stabilization and habitat improvement projects are sorely needed on this formerly high-quality trout stream.

Table 1. Species composition of 2018 North Branch Salmon River electrofishing survey

2018 Survey	Site			
	1	2	3	4
Species				
Cutlips minnow	6	4	20	15
Smallmouth bass	11	3	0	0
Blacknose dace	9	45	130	250
Slimy sculpin	6	17	0	0
Fantail darter	6	2	30	10
White sucker	0	2	15	10
Mottled sculpin	0	0	75	0
Pearl dace	0	0	25	10
Creek chub	0	0	0	20
Redside dace	0	0	0	30
Rainbow trout	1 (0.3 / hr)	0	0	0
Brown trout	1 (0.3 / hr)	0	0	0
1992 Survey				
Rainbow Trout				
Brown Trout	1 (1.7 / hr)		1 (2 / hr)	1 (1.6 / hr)
Brook Trout	6 (10.3 / hr)	1 (2.2 / hr)	9 (18 / hr)	

