

Eastern Brook Trout Joint Venture Sampling

Pete Austerman, Region 8 Fisheries

12/01/2014

Seasonal Fisheries Technicians conducted surveys on small streams across DEC Region 8 from May through October each year from 2010 to 2012 and 2014. The primary focus for this work (a part of the Eastern Brook Trout Joint Venture) is to locate undocumented wild brook trout populations or other wild trout populations. Sampling focused on the Chemung River watershed in 2010, the Upper Genesee and Upper Oswego River Watersheds in 2011, and the remainder of DEC Region 8 in 2012 and 2014. Streams in which wild trout populations were documented for the first time will be added to a list for stream reclassification. These streams will be given legal protection once the reclassification process is complete. Streams were also assessed for environmental disturbances and prioritized for future habitat improvements and brook trout restoration.

2014 Survey Results



Two-hundred fifty-four sites on 236 streams were sampled in 2014. Most streams sampled in 2014 were in the Lake Ontario and Chemung drainages. Wild brook trout populations were documented in 17 of these streams. Brown trout were found in 21 streams and rainbow trout in seven streams. Wild trout were documented for the first time in 30 of these streams. These will be added to our list of streams that are eligible to receive an upgrade in stream classification.

Overall Summary

Seven-hundred two streams were sampled over the four-year period of this project. Sampling occurred in the Chemung (300), Genesee (139), Lake Ontario (133), Oswego (117), and Susquehanna (13) drainages. Forty of these streams were dry and were not electro-fished. The remaining 662 streams were electro-fished in at least one location. Wild brook trout were documented in 100 streams. A summary of the other trout species sampled is found in Table 1. Wild trout were documented for the first time in 124 streams. We will attempt to upgrade the



Large adult brown trout collected from the Cohocton River watershed during this survey

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legal classification of these streams to protect the wild trout resource in the future. Many instances of erosion, insufficient riparian buffers, impassable culverts, and land use impacts were recorded during this project. This information will help us prioritize locations for future trout habitat improvement projects. This project is currently planned to continue through 2015 to refine our knowledge of brook trout distribution in the region.

Table 1. Summary of 2010-2012 and 2014 small stream surveys in NYSDEC Region 8.

Species	2010	2011	2012	2014	Total
Streams Surveyed - No Trout Found	70	99	108	198	475
Brook Trout Only Present	30	7	19	11	67
Brown Trout Only Present	12	16	13	14	55
Brown Trout and Brook Trout Present	12	3	9	6	30
Rainbow Trout Only Present	2	2	8	6	18
Rainbow Trout and Brown Trout Present	0	5	5	1	11
Brook, Brown, Rainbow Trout Present	1	0	1	0	2
Rainbow Trout and Brook Trout Present	1	0	0	0	1
Chinook salmon Only Present	0	0	1	0	1
Chinook salmon and Rainbow Trout Present	0	0	1	0	1
Chinook salmon, Rainbow Trout and Brown Trout Present	0	0	1	0	1
Totals	128	132	166	236	662