

Spring Creek Trout Survey (Survey #: 822024)
Michael DiSarno, Region 8 Fisheries

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Spring Creek is a 1.5-mile-long tributary to Oatka Creek that flows through Livingston and Monroe Counties in Region 8. Public access is mostly found via Caledonia State Fish Hatchery property and a DEC parking area off Main St in Caledonia (Figure 1). The creek is managed as 'Wild Quality' (WQ) under the Trout Stream Management Plan (NYSDEC 2020) from the confluence with Oatka Creek upstream to its source. Historically, trout abundance has been high within this reach, but declines were noted during 2014 and 2015 due to merganser predation (Sanderson 2020). However, surveys conducted from 2018 through 2020 documented excellent trout abundance at over 300 pounds per acre each year (Figure 2). This 2022 survey was conducted as a continuation of previous surveys to update current trout abundance estimates within this WQ reach. Similar survey sites (Veterans and Upstream, Figure 1) and methodologies have been utilized since 2014. This survey was conducted using a barge electrofishing unit at the Veterans and Upstream survey locations. Lengths of each station were 367 feet and 368 feet long and were sampled with a single pass made at each site. All trout collected were measured to the nearest millimeter and then released. No blocking seines were used during this survey. Actual abundance estimates were not attempted and wild pounds per acre and yearling and older trout per mile are based on actual numbers of trout caught within the reach.

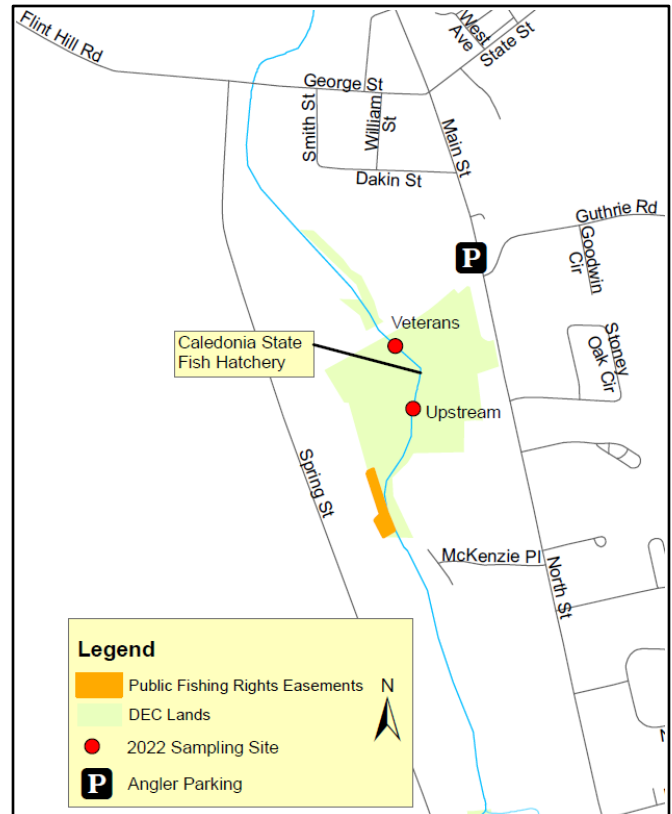
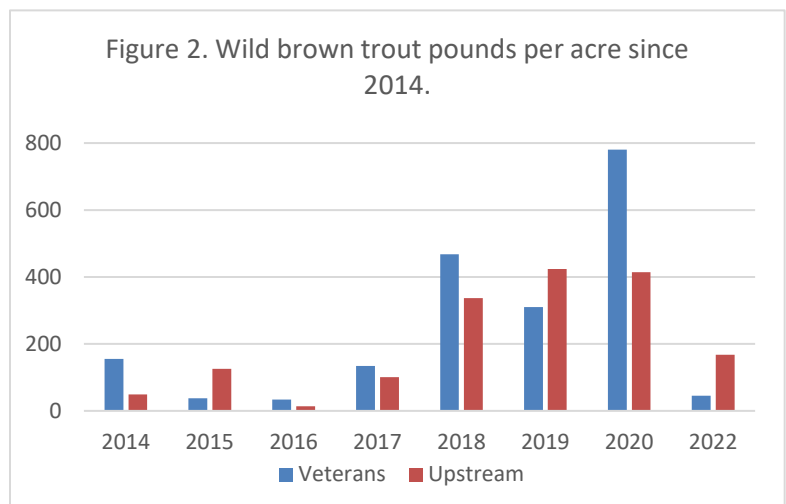


Figure 1. Sampling locations for the 2022 Spring Creek trout survey.

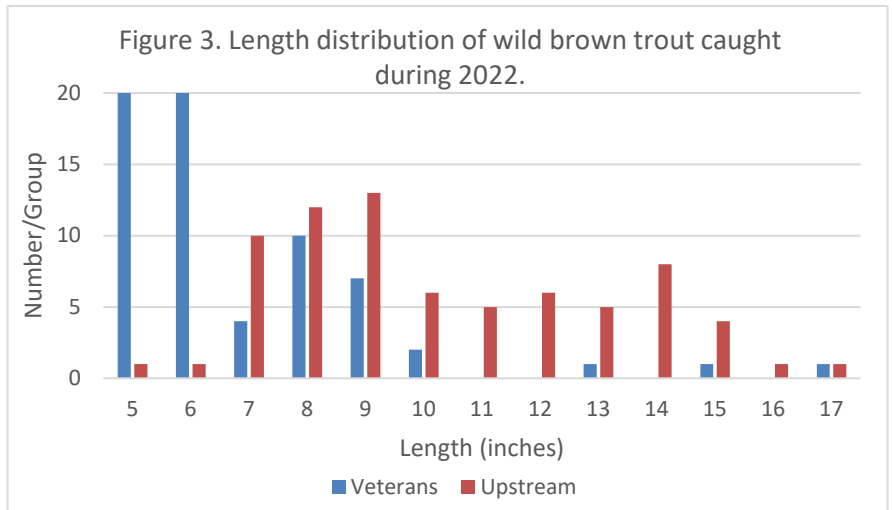
A total of 548 brown trout were caught at the Veterans reach with 482 determined to be young of year, 65 yearling and older and one stocked. Most yearling and older brown trout were seven to nine inches long with only three greater than 11 inches (Figure 3). The pounds per acre and yearling and older trout per mile was 44.1 and 935, respectively. A total of 73 brown trout were caught at the Upstream reach with no young of year or stocked fish observed. Lengths ranged from five to 17 inches with most lengths evenly distributed between seven and 15 inches. Two wild brook trout were also caught at this site with lengths of eight and nine inches. The



wild brown trout pounds per acre and yearling and older trout per mile for the upstream section was 168 and 1076, respectively.

Total wild pounds per acre for each site was down from the 2018 through 2020 totals but remained above 40 pounds per acre which is the minimum threshold for WQ under the Trout Stream Management Plan. Additionally, the long-term average since 2014 for wild pounds per acre for brown trout was 246 for the Veterans section and 204 for the Upstream section.

Below average flows and higher than normal water temperatures could be one explanation for the decline in trout abundance seen in 2022. No changes in management for Spring Creek are recommended at this time. It is recommended that this survey be repeated within the next three years to determine trout abundance within these two reaches.



Literature Cited:

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

Sanderson, Mathew. 2020. Bureau of Fisheries Technical Brief #tb820014. New York State Department of Environmental Conservation. Region 8, Avon.