

California Hollow Brook Stocked Trout Stream Survey

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California Hollow Brook is a tributary of Honeoye Creek, located near South Bolivar, Allegany County. The stream supports a population of wild brown trout and is also stocked with trout annually and was last surveyed to evaluate the stocking policy by DEC Fisheries staff in 1991 and 2001. Based on the 2001 survey, in 2020 three miles of the stream was recommended to receive 800 yearling brown trout in two stocking increments each spring. There are 1.43 miles of public fishing rights easements on the creek with other fishing access available on unposted private lands. On June 12, 2020, we sampled the creek by electrofishing at three sites, totaling 955 feet. The three sites were spread out through the length of the stocked section and had an average width of 16 feet. This survey was done to update the stream's stocking policy based on criteria in the 2020 Statewide Inland Trout Stream Management Plan.

At the lower site, which contained limited amounts of instream shelter for trout, we captured one yearling wild brown trout and five stocked brown trout. Eight non-trout fish species were also captured at this site. At the middle site, containing better adult trout habitat, we captured six yearling wild brown trout, but no stocked trout. We captured nine non-trout fish species at this site. At the upper most site, we captured one yearling wild brown trout and no stocked trout, along with three non-trout fish species. Adult trout habitat at this site was poor. For all sites combined, adult wild brown trout abundance was 61 fish/mile (1.3 lbs/acre) and stocked trout biomass was 5.9 lbs/acre. No young-of-year brown trout were captured in this year's survey.

Surveys in 1991 and 2001, done at the same locations as our 2020 survey indicated a considerably more abundant wild brown trout population, including larger individuals. The stream's wild trout population appears to have declined from past surveys and is likely to be limited by poor land use practices (extensive logging and oil well service dirt roads) and especially an overabundant beaver population. A number of active beaver ponds were observed during the survey. The beaver activity is likely adding significant silt to the stream bottom and raising water temperatures (based on the presence of non-trout fish species such as creek chubs and river chubs, redbreast dace and johnny darter) to unhealthy levels for brown trout survival and growth. Although it likely contributes to the overall fishery, the existing wild brown trout population will not support a highly satisfactory fishery on its own. Following criteria in the new Inland Trout Stream Management Plan, beginning in 2021, California Hollow Brook is being stocked from County Route 33 upstream to 0.5 miles upstream of the confluence with Kansas Hollow with 443 yearling brown trout and 47 two-year-old brown trout in one late-March stocking. Statewide stocked trout stream regulations apply, with fishing allowed from October 16 through March 31 on a catch and release basis and only artificial lures can be used. From April 1 through October 15, any lure or bait is allowed and up to five fish may be kept, with only two allowed >12 inches.

