

Root Creek Stocked Trout Stream Survey
Scott Cornett, Region Nine Fisheries

7/24/2020

Root Creek is a tributary of Little Genesee Creek, located in the Village of Bolivar, Allegany County. The stream supports a population of wild brown trout and is also stocked with trout annually and was last surveyed by DEC Fisheries staff since 1991 and 1995. On March 28th 2020, Root Creek was stocked with 750 hatchery yearling rainbow trout. There are 0.25 miles of public fishing rights easements on the creek with other fishing access available on village park property, school district property and unposted private lands. On June 23, 2020 we sampled the creek at two sites, totaling 1,425 feet. The lower site was in the village park, upstream of the mouth and the upper site was below the second Rt 417 bridge crossing, at the Bolivar-Richburg bus garage. This survey was done to update the stream's stocking policy based on criteria in the 2020 Statewide Inland Trout Stream Management Plan.



An impressive 19.2-inch wild brown trout from Root Creek

At the lower site, which contained very little cover for trout due to extensive channelization, we captured three adult (yearling and older) wild brown trout (34 fish/mile), two stocked rainbow trout and three stocked brook trout. Brook trout are not stocked in Root Creek and these fish were ones that migrated upstream from Little Genesee Creek, likely to seek thermal refuge in Root Creek's cooler flows. One young-of-year (YOY) brown trout was also captured at this site along with an abundance of sculpins

and blacknose dace. At the upper site, containing much better adult trout habitat, we captured 25 adult wild brown trout (204 fish/mile), two YOY brown trout and 16 stocked yearling rainbow trout. Adult wild brown trout ranged in length from 6.4 to 19.2 inches and averaged 8.5 inches. Stocked rainbow trout averaged 9.7 inches and ranged from 6.5 to 12.7 inches. For both sites combined, adult wild brown trout abundance was 122 fish/mile (19 lbs/acre) and stocked trout abundance was 91 fish/mile.

Surveys in 1991 and 1995, also done at the same location as our upper site showed a wide variation in wild brown trout abundance (302 fish/mile in 1991 and 32 fish/mile in 1995), with the 2020 value intermediate between the two. Although it does contribute to the overall fishery, the existing wild brown trout population is unlikely to support a highly satisfactory fishery on its own. Following criteria in the new Inland Trout Stream Management Plan, beginning in 2021, Root Creek will be stocked from the mouth upstream 2.9 miles to Black Hollow. It is recommended to receive 390 yearling rainbow trout and 39 two-year-old brown trout. Also, beginning April 1, 2021, statewide stocked trout stream regulations will 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.