

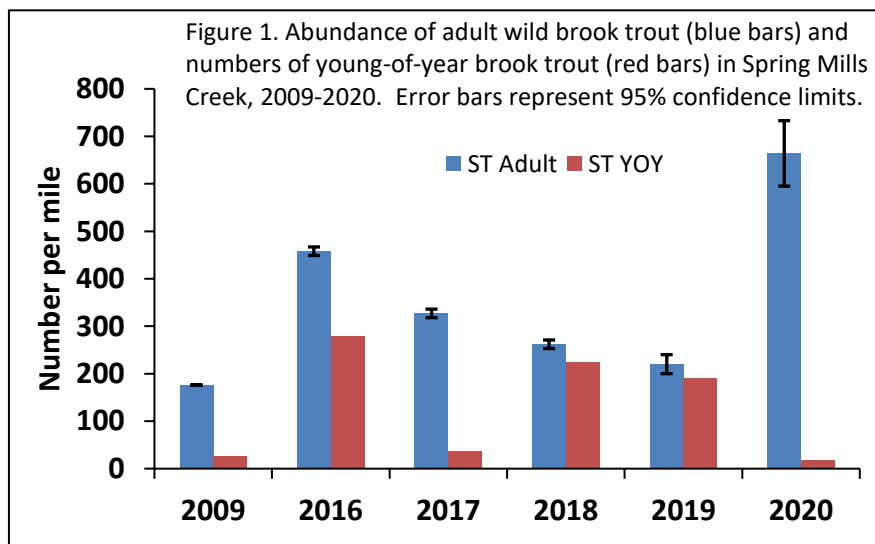
Spring Mills Creek Trout Population Evaluation

Scott Cornett, Region Nine Fisheries

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Spring Mills Creek, flowing through southeastern Allegany County, provides a fishery for wild brook trout. There are no public fishing rights easements on this stream, and access is only through posted and unposted, privately-owned property. The stream has not been stocked with trout since 1992. In 2020, as part of region-wide trout population monitoring, Spring Mills Creek was sampled by electrofishing at one site. Our site was located at the County Route 19 crossing near Cobb Road. This site had been sampled previously, in 2009 and 2016-2019. To estimate the trout population abundance, we utilized two electrofishing passes in 2016-2020, while in 2009 we utilized single pass methodology.

In 2020, over the 530 feet of stream sampled, we captured 72 yearling-and-older (adult) wild brook trout. They ranged in length from 4.1 to 10.1 inches, with an average length of 5.7 inches. This small average size is typical of low productivity wild brook trout streams in western New York. If angler harvest is low, some fish will live long enough to achieve quality size, but the average size of adult fish will be small.



In 2020, we found an adult brook trout abundance of 664 fish/mile (± 69). This value was by far the highest we have measured in any of the surveys (Figure 1). While much of this increase in abundance was driven by a high percentage of yearling brook trout captured, the overall adult brook trout biomass of 35 lbs/acre indicates the population is utilizing much of the stream's carrying capacity for trout. The number of young-of-year brook trout

captured has varied widely over the six sampling years with the numbers captured in 2020, well below the long-term average (Figure 1). Trout habitat in this stream was heavily impacted by severe flooding in July 2018; however it does not appear the trout population was substantially impacted at this site. Based on this year's sampling, it appears Spring Mills Creek will provide good fishing for anglers wishing to pursue wild brook trout in a small stream setting. Minor changes to angling regulations are expected for this stream beginning in 2021, based on the 2020 state-wide Inland Trout Stream Management Plan.

