

Cotters Pond Biological Survey (Survey # 517082)

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Cotters Pond (UH-P436) is a 12-acre waterbody in the Town of Schroon in Essex County. It is partially in the Pharaoh Lake Wilderness Area, with the rest of the shoreline privately owned. Access to the pond requires a one-mile hike on a foot trail. The pond drains into Paradox Lake and is within the Upper Hudson watershed. A special fishing regulation prohibits the use and possession of baitfish (6NYCRR §10.6 (d) (14)). It has a long-standing brook trout stocking policy and was last sampled in 1964. The purpose of this survey was a general biological assessment of current conditions.

The pond was surveyed in September 2017 using an overnight set of two 150' Swedish experimental gill nets, a 30' minnow net and a metal minnow trap. The 2017 sampling captured brook trout, golden shiner and brown bullhead (Table 1), the same species composition as documented in 1964. Brook trout numbers, however, were lower compared to the '64 effort (Table 2).

Table 1. Species, number and size ranges of fish caught in Cotters Pond, 2017.

Species	Number collected	Length range (in)
Brook trout	3	8.6 – 8.7
Brown bullhead	50	3.0 – 7.2
Golden shiner	21	2.3 – 7.0

Table 2. Comparison of brook trout numbers and size ranges from two separate sampling events at Cotters Pond.

Year	Number collected	Length range (in)
2017	3	8.6 - 8.7
1964	7	8.5 - 14

Water chemistry measurements were very good with a pH of 7.5 and an acid neutralizing capacity of 182 $\mu\text{eq/l}$. Temperature and dissolved oxygen levels were suitable for trout during this September survey, but may be marginal in mid-summer. Although results were unremarkable, data show that the pond can still support brook trout. Therefore, we will maintain the current stocking policy and continue periodic monitoring of fish and water chemistry. Since the pond is only 11 feet deep and will likely be more susceptible to warming, checking summertime water temperatures in the future will be important. Because of its relatively simple fish community, the special fishing regulation prohibiting the use or possession of baitfish should be retained.