

# NEW YORK STATE DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION

Division of Fish, Wildlife & Marine Resources, Bureau of Fisheries, Region 7  
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April 6, 2016

## To: Skaneateles Lake Angler Cooperators

Dear Fellow Anglers:

We have compiled the data from the 2015 diaries and are sending you the summary information, your 2015 diary and additional diaries for 2016 if needed. Thank you for your participation.

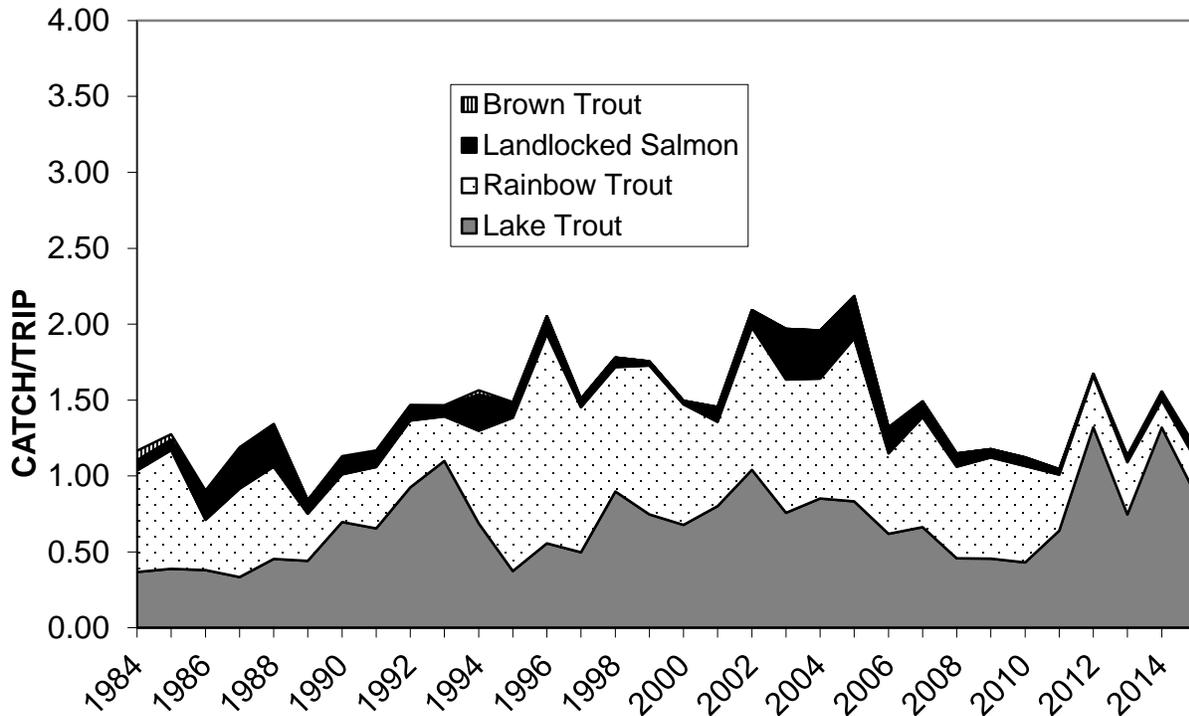
We would like to increase the number of angler cooperators in our diary program. If you didn't return your diaries this year, please do so next year. You may be removed from the mailing list if you do not participate. If you know anyone who might want to participate, please encourage them to join by calling (607) 753-3095 ext 213 or emailing [fwwfish7@dec.ny.gov](mailto:fwwfish7@dec.ny.gov).

### Open Water Trout and Salmon Fishing

In 2015, 25 Skaneateles Lake open water cooperators caught 309 legal salmonids in 260 trips (cooperator and party members combined) for an average catch of 1.2 legal fish per trip. Open water cooperators had a legal salmonid catch rate of 2.9 hours per fish, which is within the range of catch rates we have observed in the last decade. Anglers were successful in catching at least one legal salmonid in 71 percent of their trips which is about the same as 2014.

Skaneateles Lake receives annual stockings of thousands of Rainbow Trout and Landlocked Salmon as part of a largely put, grow, and take fishery. There is some level of Rainbow Trout natural reproduction from the tributaries, but its contribution to the lake population is unknown. In addition to these stocked species, native Lake Trout, Yellow Perch, and Smallmouth Bass are also popular and self-sustaining game fish regularly caught by Skaneateles anglers. Recent angler diary reports indicate that over the past few years Skaneateles Lake has not produced as many trout and salmon as it did in the past. Ecological and biological changes in the lake may be having a negative impact on the survival of both stocked and wild salmonids. Recent Skaneateles Lake warmwater angler diary reports show a substantial increase in the average size of Smallmouth Bass kept by our angler cooperators. This increase in Smallmouth Bass size is likely a result of an increasing food supply provided indirectly by the establishment of zebra mussels and increased stands of aquatic vegetation. Larger Smallmouth Bass are likely to prey on young trout and salmon and may be influencing population sizes of Rainbow Trout and salmon.

The graph below shows the catch rates (catch/trip) of legal salmonids caught by our Skaneateles Lake open water cooperators from 1985 through 2015 and the relative contribution of each species in the catch over time. Catch rates are used to remove the effects of having varying numbers of cooperators and trips from year to year. Note that the actual data are still provided in the attached summary as usual.



***Lake Trout***

Skaneateles Lake open water cooperators caught 228 legal Lake Trout, of which 110 were kept. Lake Trout comprised 74 percent of the total legal salmonid catch. An additional 61 sub-legal Lake Trout were caught and released. The Lake Trout kept by our open water cooperators averaged 19.3 inches, which is among the highest average sizes on record, and the largest one caught was 32.0 inches. The average weight of kept Lake Trout in 2015 (4.0 lbs.) was larger than normal but since relatively few are weighed this number is easily influenced by weights from a few big fish. Trolling off Five Mile Point in June produced good catches of Lake Trout. Mandana was a good location in June through September.

***Rainbow Trout***

In 2015, Skaneateles Lake open water cooperators caught 60 legal Rainbow Trout, of which 37 were kept. Rainbow Trout comprised 19 percent of the legal salmonid lake catch. An additional 32 sub-legal Rainbow Trout were caught and released. The fish kept by open water cooperators averaged 19.1 inches and the largest Rainbow Trout caught was 28.0 inches. Trolling off Mandana in August and Five Mile Point or Lourdes Camp in October produced the best catches of rainbows.

Rainbow Trout numbers in 2015 were the second lowest since the mid-1970's, however the average fish size was from four to as many as seven inches larger than those caught when the catch rates (and presumably the population size) were higher. This could be due to reduced forage competition resulting from the smaller Rainbow Trout population.

***Landlocked Atlantic Salmon***

Our open water cooperators caught 18 legal landlocked salmon, of which 14 were kept. Landlocked salmon comprised six percent of the legal salmonid lake catch. Seven additional sub-legal salmon

was caught and released. The landlocked salmon kept by our open water cooperators averaged 18.7 inches and the largest salmon caught was 23.0 inches. As with the excellent Lake Trout growth, the average weight of kept landlocked salmon was among the highest on record. Fishing at the South End in August produced the best catches.

The switch over to the “Sebago” strain of landlocked salmon in the DEC hatchery that has been described in previous cooperator letters is now complete. It is hoped that the improved returns to the fishery that have been seen in other lakes changing to this strain will also be the case for Skaneateles Lake.

### **Skaneateles Lake Tributary Fishing**

In 2015, one Skaneateles Lake tributary cooperator recorded five trips and caught no legal salmonids. There were 2 Rainbow Trout that were sub-legal and released. Grout Brook accounted for both of the Rainbow Trout caught by our cooperator. NY Works funding has been used to expand the parking area on Glenn Haven Road to accommodate more anglers, and to acquire a new parking area on West Scott Road at Grinnel Road. The new parking area is schedule to be built in 2016.

### **Skaneateles Lake Warmwater Fishing**

In 2015, our Skaneateles Lake warmwater cooperators had another excellent year of Smallmouth Bass fishing. Eight cooperators caught 204 legal Smallmouth Bass, of which 20 were kept. An additional 96 sub-legal Smallmouth Bass were caught and released. Thirty-six legal Largemouth Bass were caught and released and 29 legal Chain Pickerel was caught and released. The largest Smallmouth Bass, Largemouth Bass and Chain Pickerel caught by our warmwater cooperators were 20.0, 22.0 and 24.0 inches, respectively.

Overall, our warmwater cooperators expended 382.75 hours of effort in 80 trips to catch a total of 336 bass, of which 269 were legal size. Our warmwater cooperators indicated they targeted bass (Smallmouth and Largemouth bass combined) during 36 of their 80 trips which accounted for 144 hours of targeted effort. The catch rates for anglers targeting bass were 1.03 fish per hour for all Smallmouth Bass and 0.70 fish per hour for legal size fish. The few Largemouth Bass caught produced both an overall and legal fish catch rate of 0.01 fish per hour. These targeted bass catch rates were compared to the 2015 Otisco Lake angler cooperator targeted bass catch rates and the average targeted bass catch rates in the 1977-1980 New York State Bass Study. The Bass Study collected Smallmouth and Largemouth bass information from 12 popular bass fishing waters across the state through the use of an angler diary program. The nearest bass study water to Skaneateles Lake was Tully Lake in Preble. The 2015 Otisco Lake targeted catch rate was 0.73 legal Smallmouth Bass per hour, very similar to the Skaneateles Lake catch rate. The 1977-1980 statewide bass study targeted catch rates were 0.26 legal bass per hour (=> 12 inches), well below the 2015 Skaneateles Lake diary cooperator results.

The information provided by our warmwater cooperators suggests that Skaneateles Lake Smallmouth Bass spawning and recruitment to the fishery is very successful with many bass surviving and growing to sizes approaching 20 inches. As with the adult salmonids, growth of Smallmouth Bass appears to be increasing.

Our warmwater angler diary cooperators have provided us with a valuable history of bass fishing since 1978 and indications are that Skaneateles Lake is currently evolving into one of the best Smallmouth Bass fisheries in New York State.

Again, thank you and good fishing in 2016.

Sincerely,

Emily Zollweg-Horan  
Senior Aquatic Biologist

Skaneateles Lake Angler Diary Cooperator Response Results

Year	Total # Angler Trips	% Trips Successful	Avg Hours/Trip	Legal Salmonids Caught				Average Length of Legal Fish Kept (in.)				Average Weight of Legal Fish Kept (lbs)				# hours to catch 1 legal salmonid	# of coop.
				LT	RT	BT	LLS	LT	RT	BT	LLS	LT	RT	BT	LLS		
1966	273	66	4.1	220	69	--	--	17.9	16.2	--	--	--	--	--	--	3.9	18
1967	155	69	4.0	51	83	--	--	19.4	16.5	--	--	--	--	--	--	4.4	16
1968	171	74	4.4	92	109	--	--	18.3	16.0	--	--	--	--	--	--	3.6	17
1969	302	71	4.1	234	115	--	--	17.7	15.1	--	--	--	--	--	--	3.2	25
1970	406	80	4.2	171	237	--	--	17.9	14.7	--	--	--	--	--	--	4.1	28
1971	133	61	3.2	69	102	--	--	17.4	15.5	--	--	--	--	--	--	2.5	16
1972	217	64	4.0	51	134	--	--	17.5	16.2	--	--	--	--	--	--	4.9	16
1973	159	73	5.0	115	57	--	--	18.6	16.4	--	--	--	--	--	--	4.6	16
1974	119	90	3.5	123	57	--	--	17.7	16.4	--	--	--	--	--	--	2.2	8
1975	101	90	3.8	40	70	--	--	19.0	16.5	--	--	--	--	--	--	3.4	7
1976	94	63	6.9	60	29	--	--	18.3	18.5	--	--	1.8	3.3	--	--	7.2	9
1977	114	58	5.5	91	81	--	--	18.2	15.3	--	--	1.7	1.7	--	--	3.6	12
1978	534	75	3.4	506	503	1	--	17.5	14.5	18.5	--	1.6	1.5	2.3	--	2.7	33
1979	474	83	3.0	253	619	1	--	17.7	14.2	10.0	--	1.3	1.4	--	--	2.1	35
1980	640	76	3.1	459	759	--	--	17.5	14.5	--	--	1.7	1.3	--	--	1.9	38
1981	1018	71	3.9	607	1103	--	--	17.5	14.7	--	--	1.6	1.5	--	--	3.0	77
1982	967	73	3.7	503	1198	4	--	17.7	13.8	11.8	--	1.7	1.3	0.8	--	2.7	72
1983	977	71	3.7	699	1074	18	19	17.4	14.5	13.3	17.8	2.0	1.2	1.5	1.6	2.8	67
1984	1532	86	3.8	483	925	68	99	17.5	14.0	14.4	16.4	2.2	1.2	1.4	1.4	3.2	70
1985	1596	73	3.4	508	1179	38	94	17.5	13.9	15.1	16.9	1.9	1.0	1.5	1.5	2.7	64
1986	1252	62	3.7	396	351	10	127	17.2	13.6	15.9	16.3	1.8	0.9	2.5	1.4	4.1	51
1987	1169	68	3.6	336	609	9	258	17.4	14.5	17.4	16.5	1.8	1.1	2.2	1.4	3.0	42
1988	1090	72	4.1	438	630	4	254	17.3	15.9	18.5	17.5	2.0	1.5	2.5	1.6	3.1	50
1989	1127	61	4.1	411	322	3	87	17.1	16.9	18.7	17.7	1.9	2.5	3.0	2.1	4.8	43
1990	1100	70	4.8	614	271	10	55	17.5	15.7	18.1	18.5	1.9	2.1	1.3	1.9	2.7	43

Skaneateles Lake Angler Diary Cooperator Response Results

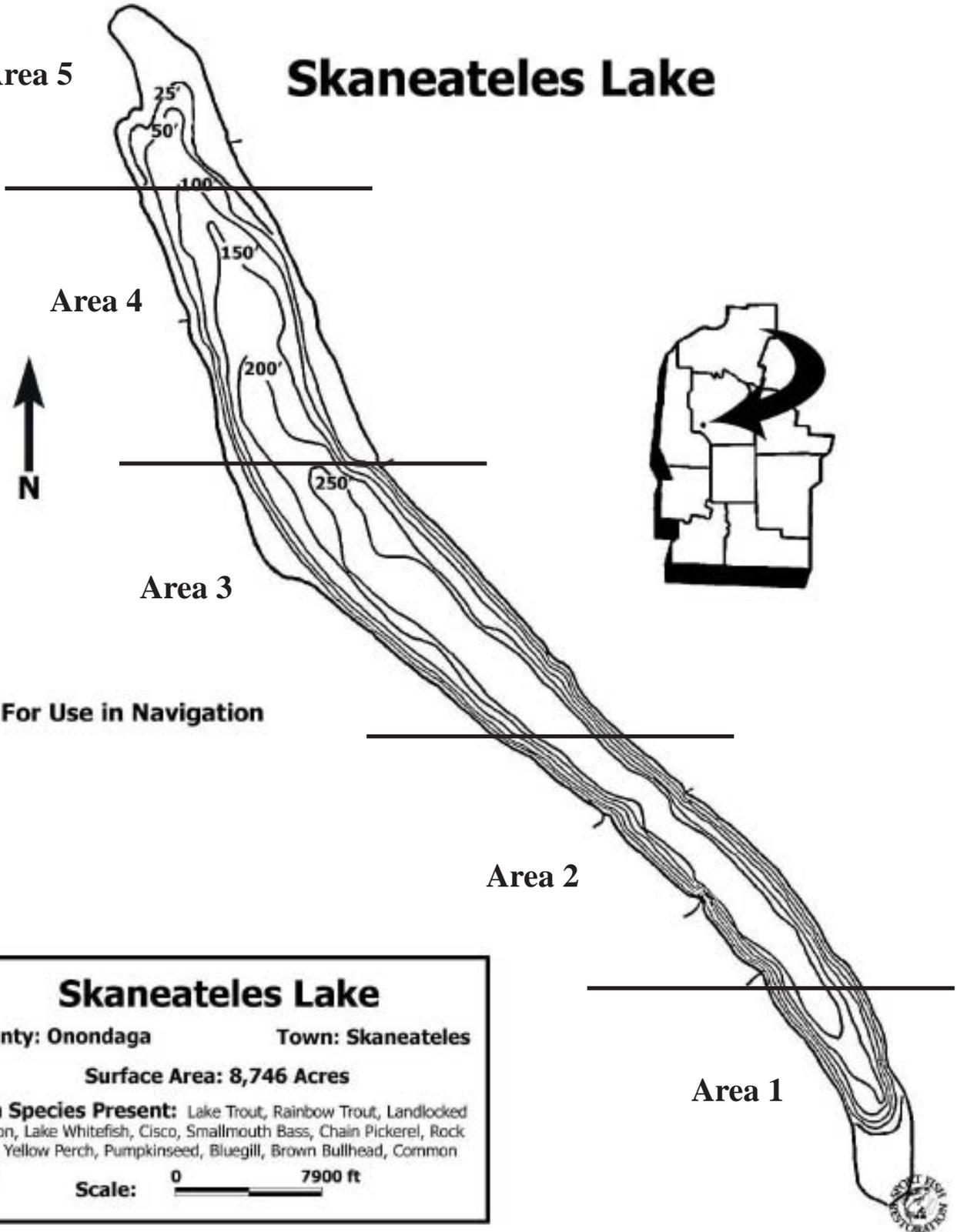
Year	Total # Angler Trips	% Trips Successful	Avg Hours/Trip	Legal Salmonids Caught				Average Length of Legal Fish Kept (in.)				Average Weight of Legal Fish Kept (lbs)				# hours to catch 1 legal salmonid	# of coop.
				LT	RT	BT	LLS	LT	RT	BT	LLS	LT	RT	BT	LLS		
1991	1109	68	3.2	581	380	9	83	17.6	16.0	18.7	17.9	2.2	1.8	--	1.8	2.7	48
1992	1069	70	3.2	778	398	5	82	17.5	16.0	19.2	17.6	1.9	1.5	--	1.6	2.2	64
1993	1101	78	3.0	969	247	2	54	17.6	16.4	18.5	17.9	1.7	1.7	--	2.3	2.1	57
1994	1026	76	3.4	542	447	11	139	17.7	15.6	19.7	17.5	2.0	1.9	2.8	1.8	2.2	57
1995	951	67	3.3	277	636	2	67	17.9	15.1	19.5	17.7	2.0	1.3	--	1.8	2.2	60
1996	849	73	3.1	375	734	0	75	17.6	15.2	--	16.7	2.0	1.4	--	1.5	1.5	48
1997	877	74	3.5	332	665	2	39	17.4	16.2	20.0	17.5	1.7	1.5	--	1.8	2.3	41
1998	812	76	3.3	417	475	0	40	17.5	16.3	--	17.7	1.5	1.6	--	1.7	1.8	44
1999	485	72	3.1	228	344	0	9	17.3	16.3	--	18.7	1.4	1.5	--	2.2	1.8	33
2000	424	72	3.1	199	271	0	10	17.7	16.0	--	17.8	1.8	1.7	--	1.5	2.1	26
2001	537	72	3.2	319	240	1	46	17.2	16.7	20.0	17.6	1.6	1.7	2.0	2.1	2.2	32
2002	418	76	3.6	435	392	0	48	17.7	16.1	--	18.0	1.5	1.7	--	--	1.7	27
2003	762	79	3.2	577	669	0	255	17.1	16.6	--	18.0	1.4	2.0	--	2.1	1.6	36
2004	646	76	3.1	550	511	0	204	17.6	16.6	--	18.9	1.7	1.8	--	2.3	1.6	33
2005	597	78	3.5	497	641	0	166.0	17.8	16.5	--	19.2	1.6	1.9	--	2.3	1.6	43
2006	519	66	3.8	321	276	1	88	17.7	17.4	--	19.0	1.7	2.3	--	2.6	2.9	36
2007	375	72	4.2	249	272	0	38	17.3	17.8	--	19.9	1.5	2.6	--	2.5	2.8	31
2008	402	64	4.1	184	243	1	34	17.7	17.9	--	20.0	2.0	2.3	--	2.5	3.5	31
2009	390	61	4.0	178	260	0	21	18.4	19.0	--	18.9	2.1	2.7	--	--	3.4	27
2010	321	67	3.7	138	204	0	18	19.2	19.2	--	20.2	2.9	3.2	--	3.4	3.3	22
2011	314	57	3.6	201	116	0	11	18.2	20.0	--	21.8	3.4	3.3	--	4.1	3.4	24
2012	227	68	3.4	300	77	0	3	18.8	20.7	--	25.0	2.0	3.6	--	6.0	2.0	19
2013	256	60	3.9	191	88	0	11	18.1	18.8		20.0	2.3	2.8		1.1	3.4	24
2014	266	70	3.2	351	48	0	15	19.3	20.4		19.0	6.4	3.3		3.4	2.0	23
2015	260	71	3.4	228	60	3	18	19.3	19.1	22.0	18.7	4.0	3.7	5.7	3.0	2.9	25



## Region 7

Area 5

# Skaneateles Lake



Area 4



Area 3

Not For Use in Navigation

Area 2

## Skaneateles Lake

County: Onondaga

Town: Skaneateles

Surface Area: 8,746 Acres

**Fish Species Present:** Lake Trout, Rainbow Trout, Landlocked Salmon, Lake Whitefish, Cisco, Smallmouth Bass, Chain Pickerel, Rock Bass, Yellow Perch, Pumpkinseed, Bluegill, Brown Bullhead, Common Carp

Scale: 0 7900 ft

Area 1

