

**Tom Peck Pond General Biological Survey #519031:
Tom Shanahan, Region 5 Fisheries**

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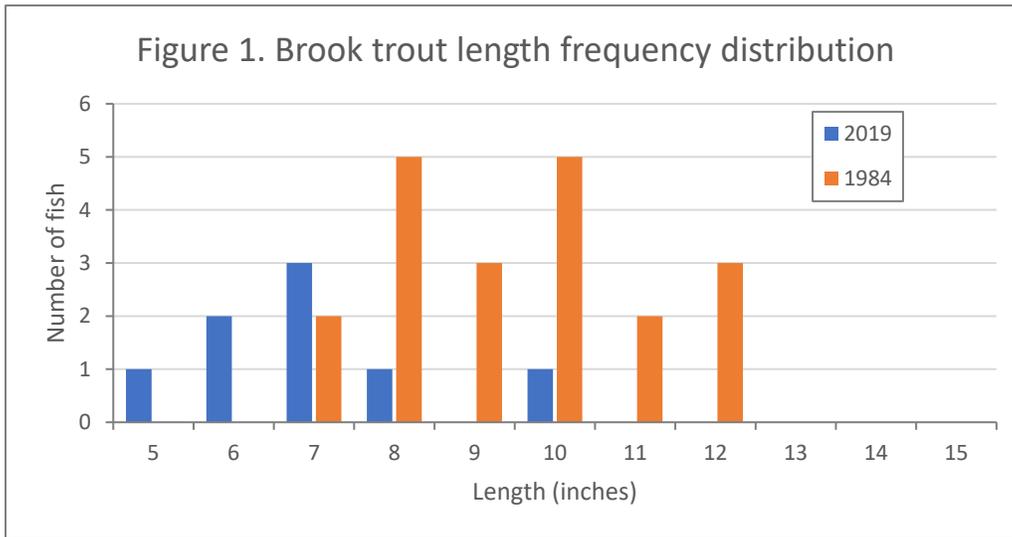
Tom Peck Pond (P242) is a small (7.4 acres) pond in the Town of North Elba in Essex County. The pond is in the Champlain watershed near Connery Pond and eventually drains into the West Branch of the Ausable River upstream of Monument Falls. The pond is relatively shallow with a maximum depth of approximately 14 feet and is characterized by a wide margin of grassy wetlands along the shore. About half of the pond is within The Saranac Lakes Wild Forest, while the remaining shoreline is privately owned. Access to the pond is via an informal foot trail off of the dirt road to Connery Pond. The pond was last sampled by the Adirondack Lakes Survey Corporation (ALSC) in 1984, so the purpose of this survey was a general biological assessment of current conditions with a focus on the brook trout fishery. The pond has an existing stocking policy of fall fingerling Temiscamie X Domestic hybrid brook trout.

The pond was surveyed in June 2019 using our standard suite of sampling gear: one 150' experimental gill net, one 30' minnow net and a metal minnow trap. Eight fish species, in addition to brook trout, were caught in the 2019 survey (Table 1.). This represents a similar species composition to the previous survey completed by ALSC in 1984, though the nonnative golden shiner is an unwelcome new addition. Water chemistry values were outstanding with a pH of 7.3 and an acid neutralizing capacity (ANC) of 155 $\mu\text{eq/l}$. Levels of silica (6.79 and 7.0 mg/l) and sodium (0.93 and 0.92 mg/l) sampled at depths of 5 and 11 feet were also excellent.

Table 1. Numbers caught and size ranges of fish from Tom Peck Pond in 2019.

Species	Number caught	Length range (inches)
Brook trout	8	4.8 – 9.7
Golden shiner	277	2.2 – 4.2
Common shiner	3	3.2 – 3.5
Northern redbelly dace	3	2.2 – 2.7
Fathead minnow	3	2.4 – 2.5
Creek chub	4	2.2 – 3.2
Pearl dace	8	2.7 – 3.1
White sucker	11	6.8 – 15.8
Brown bullhead	3	6.0 – 6.4

The 1984 survey (Figure 1.) captured several more brook trout than this most recent effort, but that is based on twice the length of experimental nets, so overall catch rates are analogous. However, there appears to be a shift to a population structure of smaller brook trout since 1984. Adirondack brook trout evolved in simple fish communities and do not fare well with competition from other fish species, so the capture of numerous golden shiners in 2019 along with seven other species of competitors is concerning for a small waterbody like Tom Peck Pond.



Despite severe competitive pressures, Tom Peck Pond has managed to maintain a brook trout fishery. Since a reclamation is not feasible due to lack of a fish barrier on the outlet, management recommendation is to maintain the current stocking policy to provide a put-and-take fishery during the spring months at this easily accessible waterbody. The pond should be periodically resurveyed to monitor the brook trout population and species composition to determine if continued stocking is warranted. Tom Peck Pond is subject to Statewide Angling Regulations, except that the use of baitfish is prohibited, and that will continue.