

Fishbrook Pond Brook Trout Egg Take (#521080)
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2/15/2022

Fishbrook Pond (C-P407) is a 35-acre pond in the town of Dresden, Washington County. The pond lies entirely within the forest preserve and is managed as an Adirondack brook trout pond under the Lake George Wild Forest unit management plan. The pond can be accessed via a 2.5-mile trail from the Sleeping Beauty trailhead on Dacy Clearing Road during the summer hiking season. Otherwise, early season anglers may have to hike from the Hogtown trailhead parking lot which extends the hike to approximately 4 miles. Fishbrook Pond flows into Greenland Brook which includes a natural fish barrier before draining to South Bay Creek and ultimately Lake Champlain. The pond has a long history of fisheries management with three prior reclamations, the most recent conducted in 1995. After the last reclamation, the pond was stocked with Horn Lake strain brook trout, a heritage New York State strain. Since that time natural spawning of brook trout within the pond has sustained the population.

Fishbrook Pond has been used as an egg source for the Horn Lake strain of brook trout since 2002. The pond had previously been stocked annually with rainbow trout up until 2009, however the stocked rainbow trout have not persisted. In 2015 a new stocking policy of round whitefish was initiated due to favorable geomorphic, chemical and biological conditions within Fishbrook Pond.

During the first week of November, two modified Oneida trap-nets were set for two net nights in Fishbrook Pond. A total of 92 brook trout were captured, (Table 1.) and two round whitefish. All fish were measured averaging between five and 16 inches in total length (Figure 1.). The target for the 2021 egg take was 27 pairs with an estimated 16 thousand green eggs to be collected for propagation. Regional fisheries staff collected eggs from 19 pairs and delivered a total of 22,245 eggs to the Warren County Fish Hatchery for further propagation. This collection effort met the target goals of the Department which needed 14,175 fall fingerlings to fulfill current Horn Lake strain brook trout stocking policies across both DEC regions 5 & 6.

The round whitefish stocking shows promise for the listed species. Round whitefish were first captured during the 2017 egg take survey and then again in this survey. The two round whitefish captured in 2021 were both aged as one year old fish. This is further documentation of successful reproduction and potential indication of a self-sustainable population.

Fishbrook Pond will continue to be the primary egg source for Horn Lake strain brook trout as it has for the last 15 years. The declining catch rates but increasing average length of ripe females may indicating a decline in overall population numbers. Currently, statewide brook trout angling regulations apply to Fishbrook Pond. Continued declines in catch may warrant a special regulation on the pond to protect the breed population. A regulation change to the creel limit could be evaluated over several seasons through this annual egg take netting. However, Figure 1 also shows a larger number of immature fish along with the larger sized fish present in the population over the last several years.



Table 1. Number, sex, stage, avg. length of ripe female brook trout collected at Fishbrook Pond, 2018-2020.

Date	Female Ripe	Female Hard	Female Spent	Male	Immature	Total	Ripe female avg. length (inches)	Percentage of total no. of females ripe
11/5/2021	18	11	4	41	18	92	12.6	55%
11/5/2020	24	15	3	17	9	68	12.1	57%
11/6/2019	42	16	4	54	9	125	10.4	67%
11/7/2018	62	101	2	204	43	442	10.2	36%

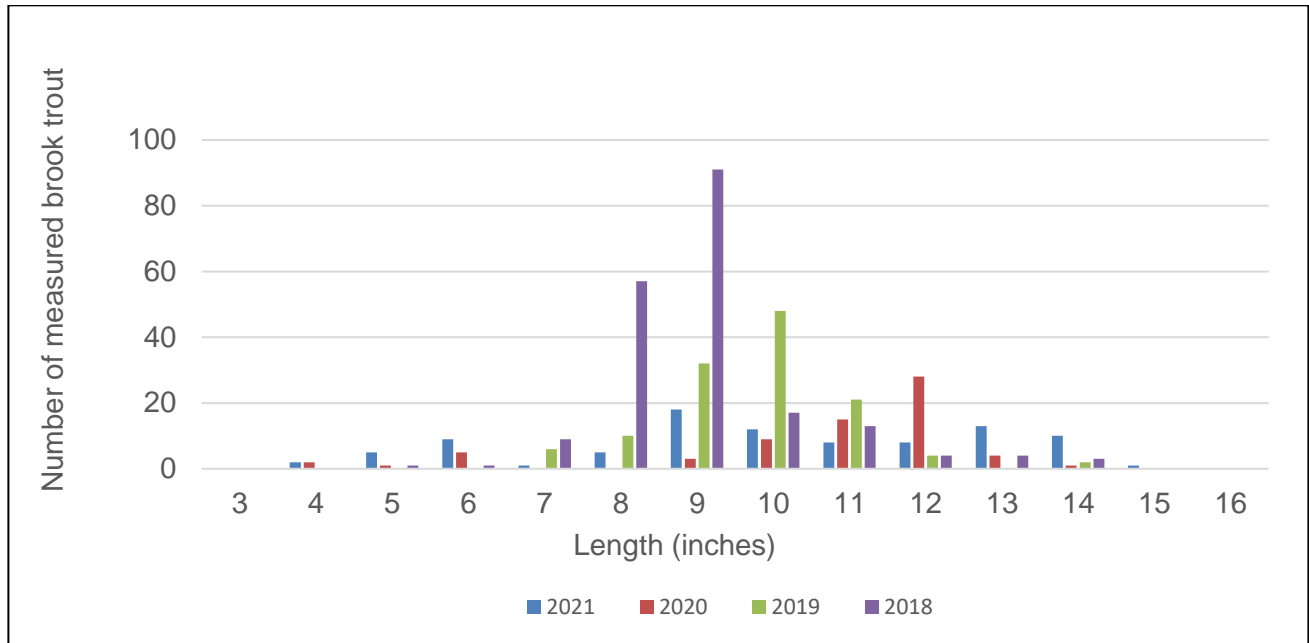


Figure 1. Length frequency of measured brook trout from Fishbrook Pond from 2018 through 2021.