

Ray Brook General Biological Survey # 521054
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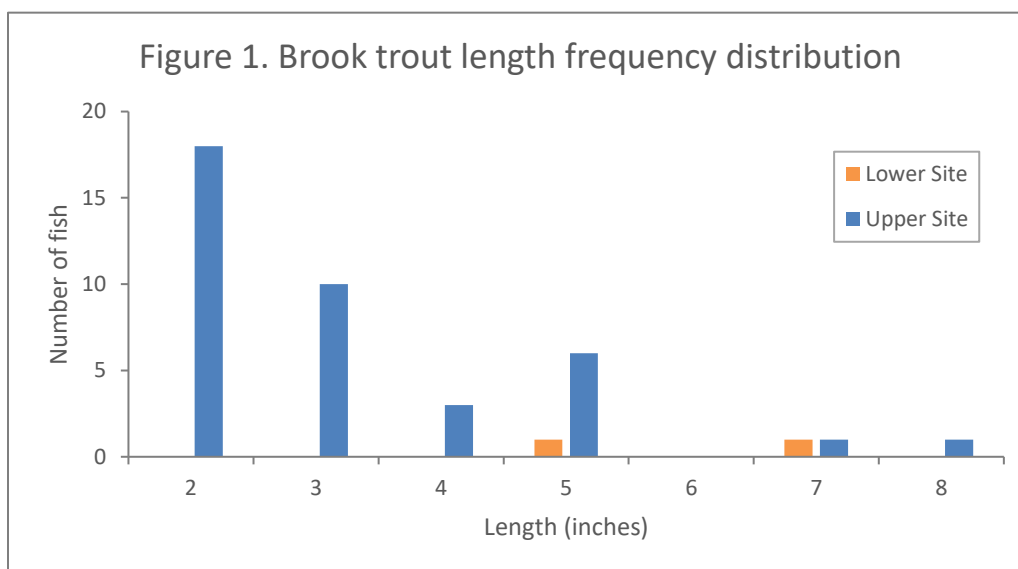
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Ray Brook (C-15-60) is a Saranac River tributary in the Champlain watershed. It is in the Town of North Elba in Essex County and most of the brook is within the Saranac Lakes Wild Forest. The brook can be accessed from the adjacent rail trail for much of its length. Brook trout are stocked downstream of the area sampled in this survey.

Two sites on Ray Brook were sampled using a backpack electrofishing unit in August 2021. The lower site was near the Saranac Lake Golf Club on Route 86 and the upper site was one mile upstream. Six fish species were caught across the two sites (Table 1). The lower site was mostly a deep and slow reach with a muck substrate but also had some shallow and vegetated areas along the margins. The upper site was in an area of braided channels featuring a sandy streambed interspersed with gravel. Brook trout, all wild, were much more abundant in the upper site (Figure 1).

Table 1. Numbers caught and size ranges of fish from Ray Brook in 2021.

Section	Species	Number caught	Length range (inches)
Lower site (120' sampled)	Brook trout	2	5.2 - 6.5
	Golden shiner	3	2.6 - 3.3
	Common shiner	1	2.7
	Northern redbelly dace	7	1.6 - 2.8
	Creek chub	2	2.5 - 3.6
Upper site (120' sampled)	Brook trout	39	1.6 - 7.6
	Slimy sculpin	9	1.6 - 2.6



At first glance, the section of Ray Brook covered by this survey does not have the appearance of a typical wild brook trout stream. The stream courses through an open and swampy area with very little gradient. It lacks the overhead cover of mature trees, though alders are abundant and provide shading. The stream has exceptional water chemistry, however, with both water temperature and conductivity readings that are superior to typical streams. The lower site had a water temperature of 56 °F (in August) and a conductivity of 117 µmhos/cm. The upper site had the same conductivity value and a water temperature of 50 °F, also taken in August. The catch rate is especially impressive for the upper site considering a relatively short segment was electrofished. No stocking of this section or other management is needed at this time.