

Indian Creek Trout Stream Survey Scott Cornett, Region Nine Fisheries

3/25/2024

On June 29, 2023, Indian Creek was electrofished at four sites by NYSDEC Region 9 Fisheries and USFWS staff to evaluate a fish passage project completed in 2020 (see survey 920033) and determine the status of the wild brook trout population in the headwater area of the stream. This stream is a spring-fed tributary of Dyke Creek, located near Andover in Allegany County. Indian Creek is entirely on private land and anglers may need to obtain owner permission to fish the stream.

In the fall of 2020, an impassable culvert on a private driveway was improved by installing an engineered rock riffle downstream to back water up into the culvert. Sampling in 2022 by USFWS staff determined that wild brook trout were moving upstream through the improved culvert. An additional culvert on the town road near the headwaters, which was also thought to be impassable to fish, had not been improved. This sampling effort focused on determining if brook trout were present above and below this culvert. In a 125-foot site located below this culvert (Figure 1), we captured 11 adult and eight young-of-year (YOY) wild brook trout. A 75-foot site immediately above the culvert captured no fish, confirming the culvert was not passable to fish and indicating that no brook trout likely exist upstream of this culvert.

Additional sites were sampled above and below the 2020 culvert project. In a 150-foot site below the culvert (Figure 2), we captured seven adult and 48 YOY wild brook trout, while in a 125-foot site above the culvert we captured five adult and 11 YOY wild brook trout. One of the adult brook trout at this site was previously tagged by USFWS below the culvert in 2022, again indicating that movement through the improved culvert is occurring. The density of adult brook trout below the culvert was far lower than we found in 2020 prior to the culvert improvement project. However, in 2020 the majority of trout we captured were in the plunge pool below the impassable culvert while in 2023 fish were no longer confined and spread out upstream due to the improved culvert.

Figure 1. Electrofishing the headwaters of Indian Creek, June 29, 2023.



Figure 2. Improved lower culvert on Indian Creek, June 29, 2023.

