

**Wing Creek Trout Survey**  
Scott Cornett, Region Nine Fisheries

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Wing Creek, a tributary of Prendergast Creek in Chautauqua County, provides a limited fishery for wild brown trout. This small stream, averaging 15 feet in width, begins just west of Mount Pleasant State Forest and flows for approximately six miles to its junction with Prendergast Creek. NYSDEC – Region 9 Fisheries surveys done in 1990, 2001 and 2013 had found low population densities of wild brown trout from the mouth upstream to Morris Road. Following up on a lead from a knowledgeable angler that there appeared to be good trout habitat near the stream's headwaters within the State Forest, we electrofished at a site located below T-10 in the State Forest on June 14, 2023. We also sampled a site further downstream on Potter Road Extension, which had not been sampled before. Approximately 0.9 miles of the stream is within the State Forest, which provides the only official public fishing access on the stream.

At the 400-foot-long site within the State Forest, we found suitable habitat, but no trout were captured. We did find eight other fish species, some of which were warm-water indicator species (northern hogsucker, redbreast dace and central stoneroller). The stream bottom was heavily silted at this site, indicating upstream impacts from logging, agriculture, or beaver dams. It is possible water temperatures are also limiting for trout at this location, though water temperatures were not indicative of it due to low air temperatures on the day of sampling.

At the Potter Road Extension, a 600-foot-long site produced eight adult and one young-of-year wild brown trout along with nine other fish species. Again, warmwater indicator fish species were common, suggesting that high stream temperatures may be a limiting factor for trout in this stream. However, it appears that conditions are more suitable for trout survival in the lower two-thirds of the stream verses the headwater areas. The streambed at the Potter Road Extension site indicates the stream experiences very high flows at times and within our sampling site there was evidence of past, unpermitted stream channel work. All the adult trout were captured in two pools at the upper end of the site which had some depth and large downed tree cover, indicating this section of stream lacks sufficient suitable cover and pools to support more adult wild trout.