

North Branch Wiscoy Creek Young-of-Year Trout Population Estimate

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In late summer 2023, Region 9 Fisheries staff sampled the North Branch Wiscoy Creek (hereafter, N. Branch). The N. Branch is a major tributary of Wiscoy Creek and has over a mile of public fishing rights easements. The stream from its mouth upstream to the Route 362 crossing is currently managed with a “Wild-Quality” designation, having a year-round open season, including catch and release – artificial lures only from October 16 through March 31. From April 1 through October 15, three fish may be harvested with only one that can be >12 inches. As part of New York State’s trout stream management plan, the stream was sampled in the “Wild-Quality” section by three-pass electrofishing at two sites (duplicating 2021 and 2022 efforts) for the purpose of estimating the numbers of young-of-year (YOY) brown trout present. This fish sampling will be combined with late fall angler counts to assess any possible negative impacts, statewide, of the new extended catch-and-release fishing season.

In 2023, a total of 95 YOY brown trout were captured at a site in the Village of Bliss, yielding a population estimate of 107 YOY (597 YOY/acre ±42). At the upstream site located within a stream habitat enhancement project completed in 2011, a total of 286 YOY brown trout were captured yielding a population estimate of 289 YOY (2,793 YOY/acre ±34). The 2023 abundance of YOY at both sites was significantly higher than 2021 or 2022, with the abundance at the upper site over five times higher (Table 1). These sampling sites were chosen for containing abundant spawning and nursery habitat. However, a number of yearling and older (adult) wild brown trout were also captured at both sites (90 at the Village of Bliss site and 13 at the upstream site).

This survey, along with the late fall angler counts are planned to be repeated state-wide in 2024.

Table 1. Young-of-year brown trout population abundance estimates (number of fish per acre) in North Branch of Wiscoy Creek surveys, 2021-2023.

<u>Site</u>	<u>2021</u>	<u>2022</u>	<u>2023</u>
Village of Bliss	456	460	597
Upper site	439	484	2,793

