

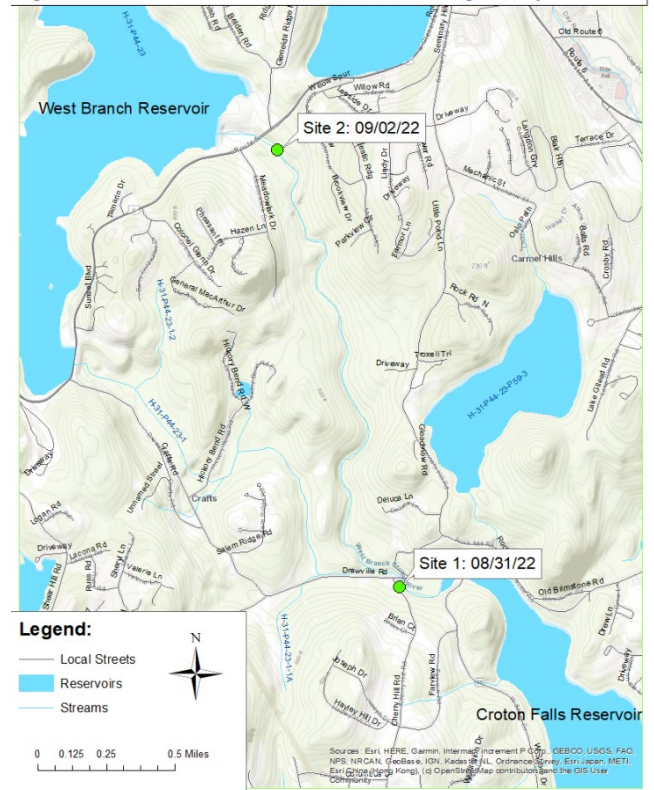
West Branch Croton River Trout Survey (Survey#: 322025)

Ryan Coulter, Region 3 Fisheries

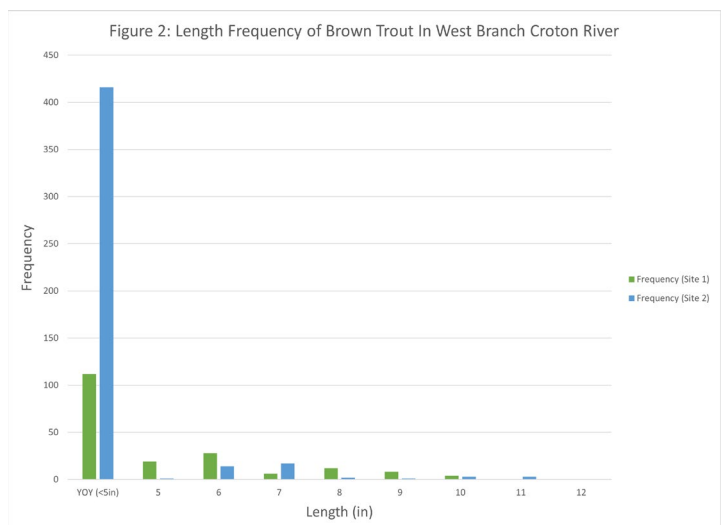
September 2022

The West Branch Croton River (West Branch Reservoir Outlet) is a 2.3 mile-long tailwater fishery that starts at the West Branch Reservoir Dam and ends at Croton Falls Reservoir located in the Town of Carmel, Putnam County. The West Branch Croton River receives a cold-water discharge through a bottom release from the West Branch Reservoir. NYC DEP provides access to the entire stretch of river. Under the new Trout Stream Management Plan (NYSDEC 2020) the West Branch Outlet is now managed as a “Wild Quality” trout stream. The West Branch Outlet is not stocked with trout and has an open trout season from April 1st through October 15th with a daily limit of 3 with no more than 1 longer than 12”. From October 16th through March 31st is catch and release only for trout using artificial lures only. Two sites were sampled in this managed reach using two backpack electrofishing units on 8/31 and 9/2/22 (Figure 1). Site one was 406 feet in length and two runs were conducted. Site two was 375 feet in length and two runs were conducted. No blocking seines were used during this survey. Emphasis was placed on targeting young of year size trout (<125 mm). The purpose of this survey is to evaluate young of year trout abundance following the Angler Use and Wild Trout Young of Year Recruitment Sampling Plan (NYSDEC 2021).

Figure 1: West Branch Croton River Electrofishing Survey Locations



A total of 646 brown trout were caught during this survey, with 528 considered to be young of year (YOY). Brown trout lengths ranged from 1.7 to 11.6 inches (Figure 2). The estimated YOY/acre is 381 for site one and 1190 for site two. The West Branch Outlet could not be sampled in 2021 due to high water making sampling efforts unsafe.



As part of the Angler Use and Wild Trout Young of Year Recruitment Sampling Plan (NYSDEC 2021) this survey will be conducted every year through 2024. This statewide effort is in response to concerns regarding spawning success with the new catch and release season. A full report will be produced in 2025.



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Literature Cited

NYSDEC. (2021). *Angler Use and Wild Trout Young of Year Recruitment: Evaluating New York's Inland Trout Stream Catch and Release Season*. Albany: New York State Department of Environmental Conservation.

NYSDEC. (2020). *New York State Trout Stream Management Plan*. Albany: New York State Department of Environmental Conservation.