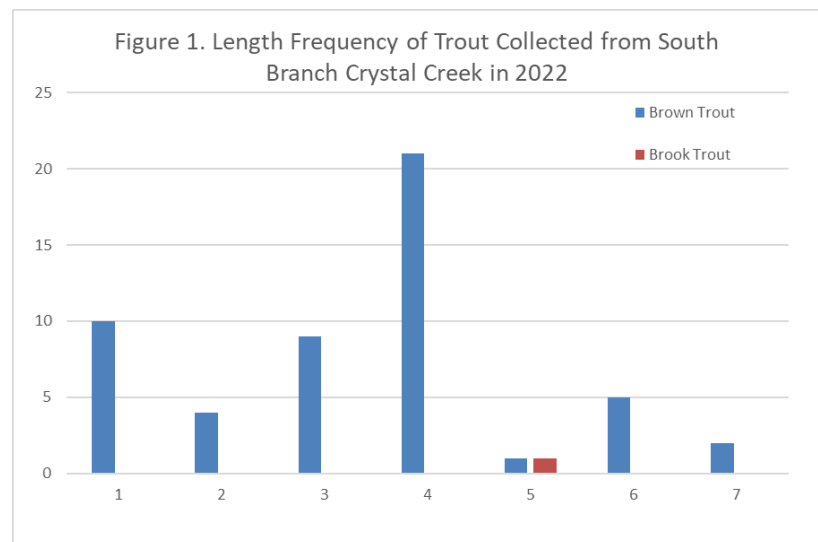


South Branch Crystal Creek CROTS Survey (Survey #: 622010)

Les Resseguie, Region 6 Fisheries

06/14/2023

The South Branch Crystal Creek (ONT-19-45-5) is a 4.7-mile-long tributary to Crystal Creek in the Towns of Watson and New Bremen in Lewis County. This stream is classified as C and C(T) (i.e., suitable for fishing and trout present). Public access is available through the Indian Pipe State Forest, which includes an accessible fishing platform, and approximately 0.5 miles of Public Fishing Rights. Statewide trout stream regulations apply for trout with an open season April 1 – October 15 and a daily limit of 5 fish with no more than 2 over 12 inches; and an October 16 – March 31 catch and release, artificial lures only season. Current angling effort is unknown, yet it is likely low. In June 2022, a Catch Rate Oriented Trout Stocking (CROTS) survey was conducted to evaluate the current status of the stream and trout population, and to determine the appropriate management category for current conditions as outlined in the New York State Trout Stream Management Plan (TSMP; NYSDEC 2020).



Using backpack electrofishing, two sites were surveyed on June 21, 2022. Fifty-two brown trout (1 - 7 inches) and one brook trout (5 inches; Figure 1) were collected along with other species common to the area (Table 1). South Branch Crystal Creek is not stocked by NYSDEC; therefore, all salmonid species are considered wild. Using data collected in 2022, the CROTS model estimates a wild trout biomass of 11.2 pounds per acre, which is below the biomass criteria of 40 pounds per acre needed to reclassify as a Wild-Quality trout stream.

Based on the 2022 survey results, we recommend continuing to manage the South Branch of Crystal Creek as a Wild reach with statewide trout stream regulations (open season April 1 – October 15 and a daily limit of 5 fish with no more than 2 over 12 inches; and an October 16 – March 31 catch and release, artificial lures only season. We expect the South Branch of Crystal Creek to provide anglers the opportunity to target wild brown and brook trout in a small stream setting with minimal angling pressure. We recommend that this stream be reclassified as C(TS) by NYSDEC Division of Water (i.e., suitable for fishing and trout spawning).

Table 1. Fish species and numbers collected during the 2022 South Branch Crystal Creek CROTs Survey.

Common Name	Number
Brook Trout	1
Brown Trout	52
Creek Chub	4
Slimy Sculpin	4

Literature Cited

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