

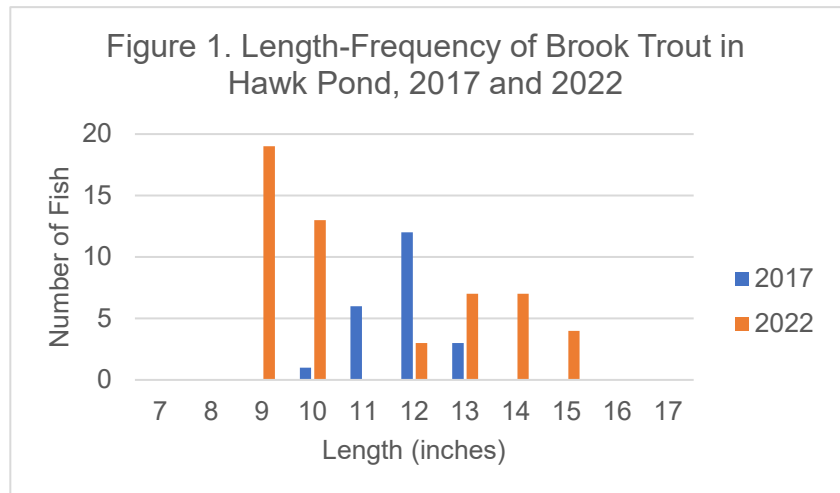
Hawk Pond Brook Trout Survey (Survey #:622209)

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Hawk Pond (ONT-19-40-P493-6-1-P504) is a 37-acre pond north of Stillwater Reservoir in the Five Ponds Wilderness Area. An Adirondack Lakes Survey Corporation fisheries survey was conducted in 1984 and a Department of Environmental Conservation fisheries survey was conducted in 2012 and no fish were collected in either survey. This water is in the Limed Waters Program and was limed in 2014 to increase the potential for brook trout survival. Undocumented angler reports indicated that there may be brook trout present so another fisheries survey was conducted in July 2014. While pulling one of the gill nets a brook trout head was observed in the net but fell into the water while the net was brought into the boat. The half-eaten fish was estimated to be 9-10 inches. One thousand fin clipped Temiscamie Hybrid and 1,000 Horn Lake brook trout were stocked in the fall of 2014 and 2015 to identify which strain of brook trout would produce the best offspring. A 2017 survey caught stocked individuals from both strains, and two older unclipped brook trout that were most likely naturally reproduced prior to the 2014 stocking. The Horn Lake strain of brook trout is endemic to the Adirondacks; therefore, we continued stocking only Horn Lake strain brook trout beginning in the fall of 2018 as a means of expanding the current geographic area of this strain. In an effort to produce larger fish in this remote water the stocking rate was reduced by 62.5%. Stocking of 750 marked Horn Lake strain fall fingerlings began in 2019. Three experimental gill nets, a minnow net and minnow trap were set overnight on September 22, 2022, to assess the current brook trout population.

Brook trout are still the only fish species present in this water. Fifty-five brook trout were captured including four unclipped individuals suggesting that a low level of natural reproduction is occurring. The length range of stocked fish is between 9.1-15.9 inches, while the length range of the unclipped fish is between 9.2-15 inches (Figure 1). The average length of all brook trout collected in Hawk Pond is 11.5 inches. Otoliths were removed and cross sectioned to determine age. Four age classes were collected and average length and weight at age were calculated (Table 1.) The catch rate is 18.3 trout/net night which is quite high.



In an effort to further increase the size of the trout in this water it is recommended that the stocking rate be reduced to 500 fall fingerlings per year to reduce competition for available food



in the pond. Surveys will be conducted in the future to determine the effects of the stocking rate change and assess the brook trout population including natural reproduction.

Table 1. Average Length and Weight at Age of Brook Trout Collected in September 2022

Age	Length (inches)	Weight (pounds)	Sample Size
1	9.6	0.38	11
2	11.8	0.69	12
3	14.3	1.13	11
4	15.9	1.5	1