

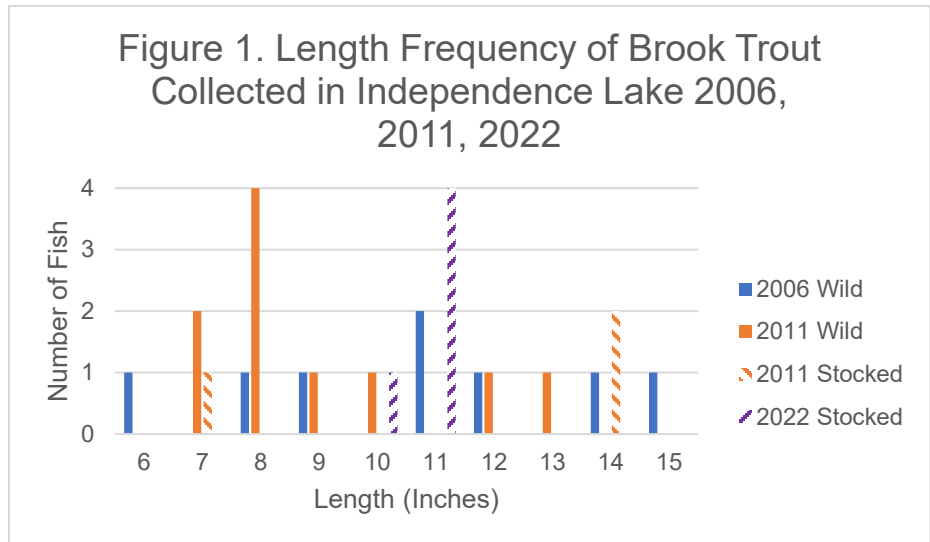
Independence Lake Brook Trout Survey (Survey #:622206)

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Independence Lake (ONT-19-57-25-P647) is located in Herkimer County on Town of Webb lands. Public access for angling Independence Lake is provided through a Fish and Wildlife Management Act Cooperative Agreement. This agreement allows anglers access between April 1-September 15. This 55-acre pond has a maximum depth of approximately 15 feet and is currently stocked annually with 500 fall fingerling Horn Lake strain brook trout. Stocking began in 2007 after a survey conducted in 2006 collected a small number of wild brook trout and it was decided to supplement the wild population with stocked fish to increase the brook trout population for angling purposes. A 2011 survey collected a mix of stocked and wild brook trout. Four Redden experimental gill nets, a minnow gill net and a minnow trap were set overnight on June 29, 2022 to update our information on this mixed wild and stocked brook trout water.

Five stocked brook trout were collected that ranged in length from 10.1-11.5 inches (Figure 1). No wild brook trout were caught during this survey. Several species were caught in our 2022 survey including brook trout (stocked), brown bullhead, pumpkinseed, white sucker, creek chub and northern redbellied dace. Prior to stocking brook trout in 2007, the catch rate for brook trout was 2.7 brook trout/net night.



The catch rate rose slightly after stocking began and was 3.3 brook trout/net night in 2011. The catch rate for this 2022 survey was 1.3 brook trout/net night.

The population of brook trout in Independence Lake remained low despite stocking for 15 years. The relatively low number of brook trout is likely due to the competitor species present and limited habitat. We recommend ending stocking. Future surveys should be conducted once stocking ends to determine the status of the wild brook trout population.

