



Wisconsin DNR Fisheries Information Sheet

Water: Wausaukee River

County: Marinette

WBIC: 611400

Year: 2015

The Wausaukee River originates approximately 13.5 miles northwest the town of Wausaukee. The river is located in the Wausaukee and Lower Menominee Rivers watershed which is 187.05 mi². Land use in the watershed is primarily wetland (44%), forest (33%) and a mix of agricultural (13%) and other uses (10%). The river runs in a southeasterly direction through Marinette County on it's way to the Menominee River. The total length of the Wausaukee River is approximately 23 miles. Nearly 19 miles are Class I trout waters and the remaining 4 miles are Class II. Brook trout and brown trout were stocked regularly until 1974. Since 1974 brown trout have been stocked regularly and are currently stocked yearly. Brook trout have not been stocked since 1974.

The Department of Natural Resources assessed the brook and brown trout populations in the Wausaukee River, Marinette County, on August 19th, 2015. Barge electrofishing was conducted upstream and downstream of the bridge on Beliak road in the Town of Wausaukee (T.34N. -R.20E. Section 21 and 28) (Figure 1). This 0.38 mile station is sampled in alternate years.

Brook Trout

A total of 121 brook trout was collected in the Wausaukee River (Figure 2). Brook trout ranged in length from 2.1 to 9.0 inches and averaged 5.4 inches. Overall, 3% of brook trout were greater than the 8-inch minimum length limit (MLL).

Brown Trout

A total of 8 brown trout was collected. Brown trout ranged in length from 2.8 to 12.2 inches and averaged 5.5 inches. Only two brown trout were greater than the 8-inch MLL.



Figure 1. Sampling location (star) on the Wausaukee River, Marinette County.

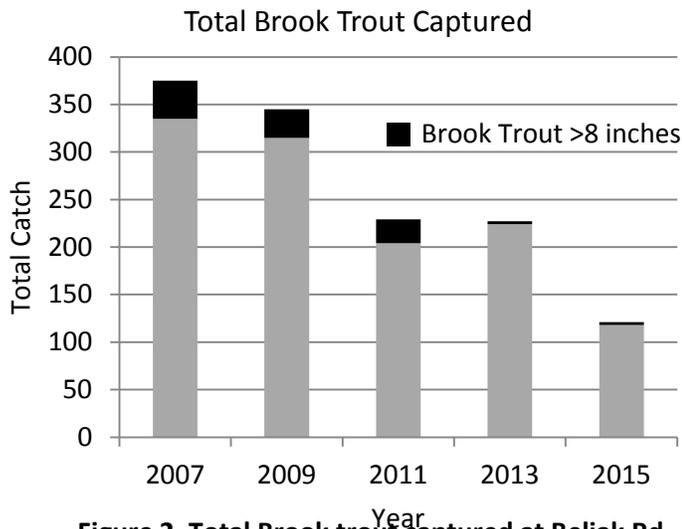


Figure 2. Total Brook trout captured at Beliak Rd, Wausaukee River, Marinette County on August 19th, 2015.

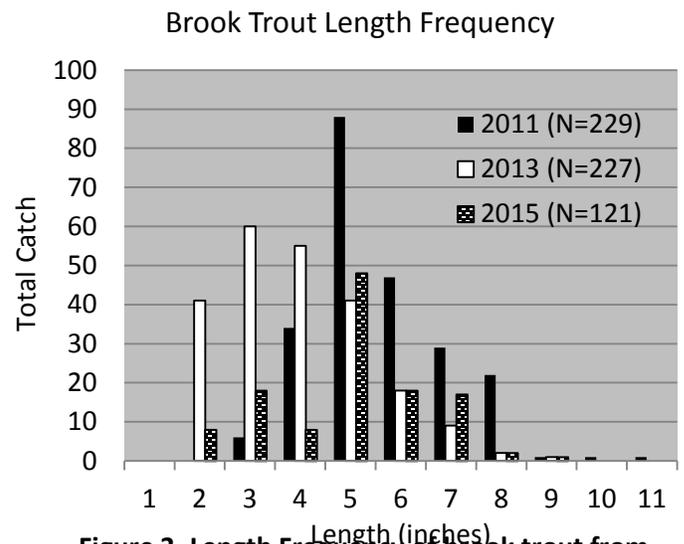


Figure 3. Length Frequency of brook trout from 2011, 2013, and 2015; Beliak Rd, Wausaukee River, Marinette County.

Summary

The total number of brook trout captured in the Wausaukee River at Beliak Rd has been slowly declining since 2007 (Figure 2). The number of brook trout captured in 2007 was 375 fish but decreased in 2009 (345), 2011 (229), 2013 (227), and the current survey in 2015 (121). In 2007, the number of brook trout captured over 8 inches was 40. In each subsequent survey year, the number collected at or over the MML of 8 inches has fallen (Figure 2). The 2015 survey produced just 3 brook trout greater than 8 inches (Figure 3).

The brown trout fishery in the Wausaukee River at Beliak Rd offers only a limited fishing opportunity. Brown trout collected between 2007 and 2013 have not experienced the same decline as brook trout. Brown trout numbers have remained relatively stable since 2007 and have exhibited only minor variations in abundance. The current 2015 survey showed a decrease in brown trout and brook trout numbers. Only 2 brown trout greater than 8 inches were captured in 2015.

Relative weight (W_r), as a measure of “plumpness” and overall condition, provides an indication of prey availability and resource usage. A relatively low mean W_r (i.e. well below the species standard of 100) indicates that resources may be limiting. Additionally, if the mean W_r is above the species standard of 100, then food and resources are abundant and there is potential for additional fish production. Mean W_r for both brook and brown trout has remained stable between 2007 and 2015. Relative weights for both trout species are well below the standard and suggest resources may be limiting. Further investigation may be required to better understand the low mean relative weights and the overall decline in trout abundance.

The current (2016) fishing regulations for the Wausaukee River have been changed from a 12-inch MLL for brown trout and an 8-inch MLL on brook trout and a daily bag limit of 3 trout total to an 8-inch MLL for brown and brook trout. The bag limit of 3 total trout has not changed.

You may obtain a copy of current fishing regulations when you purchase your fishing license or download a copy from our web site at: (<http://dnr.wi.gov/fish/regulations/>).

Questions about fisheries management activities for the Wausaukee River can be directed to:

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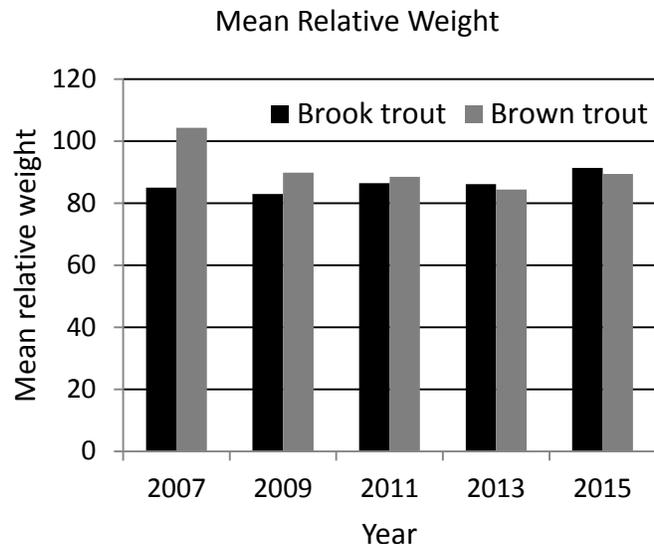


Figure 4. Mean W_r of brook trout and brown trout collected 2007 through 2015 at Beliak Rd, Wausaukee River, Marinette County.