



Maine Remote Pond Survey: Frequently Asked Questions

What is the status of brook trout in Maine?

Maine has the most extensive distribution and abundance of brook trout throughout their native range in the United States, and has been designated as the last true stronghold for wild brook trout. The state of Maine contains 97% of all the wild or native brook trout lakes and ponds remaining in the entire country, and represents one of the largest reservoirs of native salmonid genetic diversity left in the country. We have a special responsibility to protect this unique natural resource.

There are significant threats to wild brook trout throughout their range. While Maine has the majority of pond-dwelling and sea-run brook trout left, they have not escaped exploitation and face significant challenges. Conservative management is absolutely critical to the survival of the species.

Native brook trout in Maine are a valuable resource of unrivaled ecological, historic and economic importance. In order to focus on conservation and protection, we first have to understand the extent of the species' current range. The Maine Brook Trout Survey Project is a critical component of this important mission. Maine is one of the only places in the contiguous United States where previously-unknown populations of wild and native salmonids are still being discovered. Through proper identification and regulation, brook trout waters can be better protected and remain viable into the future.

What is the overall goal of the Remote Pond Survey?

Maine Audubon, along with partners Trout Unlimited and the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife (MDIFW), is seeking volunteers to identify previously-undocumented wild brook trout populations in remote Maine ponds. The goal is to collect information to help inform future fisheries management decisions. Maine brook trout are a special resource, and we need to know where they are before we can protect and manage them appropriately.

What is the purpose of this survey?

Maine has hundreds of lakes and ponds that have never been surveyed by MDIFW. There are no records of past stocking in any these ponds either, so any brook trout found in them are native, wild fish. This project seeks to focus survey efforts on those ponds that are most likely to contain wild populations of brook trout in a three-step process: (1) We've used existing knowledge from anglers, MDIFW biologists and wardens to identify priority waters to survey; (2) Recruit volunteer anglers to visit each water body and identify those where they observe or

catch brook trout or find signs of active angling; (3) Use information from the volunteer survey to prioritize a list of waters for a more detailed survey by MDIFW biologists.

Why haven't these ponds been surveyed before?

Many of these waters are small and/or remote. A formal survey effort for all of them would require tremendous manpower and take many years. The goal of this project is to help prioritize which waters are most likely to harbor brook trout and should be formally surveyed by MDIFW biologists.

Why is this information important?

MDIFW biologists need accurate information in order to make management decisions. Knowing whether or not brook trout are present in a pond may lead to changes in regulations, habitat protection, environmental permit reviews, or other management decisions.

Ultimately, ponds that are confirmed to contain self-sustaining populations of wild brook trout should be added to the list of State Heritage Fish Waters, which affords certain protections to help maintain healthy, viable populations of wild brook trout. Specifically, Heritage listing prohibits the use of live bait and does not permit stocking.

How can I sign up to help?

Interested anglers should contact **Leah Bevins** at lbevins@maineaudubon.org or **207-781-2330 (x207)**. Additional information can also be found at the project website: <http://tomaine.org/brooktrout.htm>. Maine Audubon and its partners will provide maps, photos, data sheets and instructions for how to survey each pond. Anglers should be enthusiastic about fishing for brook trout, be comfortable in remote settings, and have a sense of adventure. Surveys can be done any time before September 30, but we are encouraging anglers to get out as early as possible in the spring. May, June and early July are prime times to catch pond-dwelling brook trout in Maine.

Can I provide survey information for a pond that is not on the list?

Absolutely. We can still use information on ponds in other regions. You may want to contact us in advance about the pond you are interested in to determine if it has been surveyed in the past.

Questions? Contact:

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