

Hello Brian & Friends of Lake Winnecook,

I just got through reading your email and the analysis provided. You certainly spent some time collecting and analyzing water quality data, and we appreciate it. It has been quite a few years since we've been on Unity Pond to measure temperature, dissolved oxygen, water clarity, etc., so we'll definitely include your report in our files. Thanks for forwarding it along.

As for your trout stocking questions:

[When was the stocking of fish stopped on this lake & Why?](#)

MDIFW ceased the brook trout (a put-and-take fishery) and brown trout (a put-grow-take fishery) programs for a few different reasons. Primarily, neither fishery was providing adequate returns to anglers. Plus, brown trout were not readily surviving to older ages, so the allocation of 1200 fall-yearling brown trout (~\$8/fish) wasn't a good investment. We want anglers to have a good chance at catching the fish we stock. There a number of reasons that contributed to the inadequate returns including poor midsummer water quality (i.e. cold water (< 68°F) and suitable dissolved oxygen (≥ 5 ppm) at the same depth strata, a substantial decline in rainbow smelt abundance (an important forage base), increased competition and predation from other fishes (namely invasive black crappie and northern pike), and the pond's large overall size (~2600-acres).

[What will be the requirements and or Threshold that will have to be met to be able to restart the stocking of this lake?](#)

If water quality & clarity were the only factors influencing stocking programs, then Unity may be perfectly suitable for a put-grow-take brown trout fishery. However, combined with the other factors (i.e. invasive species & near smelt absence), it isn't a good choice for a stocking program. So, there aren't really threshold values that we're looking for in order to restart the program(s). Unfortunately, the immense biomass of black crappie (and white perch, yellow perch, etc.) aren't going anywhere. Unity Pond is an incredibly productive water, but it's much better suited to warm water species and offers a tremendous and popular fishery for them.

[Do you have the Alewives count for 2020 from the Benton Falls Dam on the Sebasticook river?](#)

The sea-run fish counts can be found at the following address. As of 06/29/20, the alewife count at Benton Falls was close to 3 million.

<https://www.maine.gov/dmr/science-research/searun/programs/trapcounts.html>

Please feel free to include our office on any correspondence concerning your award and collaboration efforts. And, if you have any questions/concerns about my fishery comments above, please don't hesitate to call or email.

Thanks again,

Wes

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