

# LAKE GEORGE

## ANGLER DIARY COOPERATOR SUMMARY

### FOR THE 2008 FISHING SEASON



Prepared by

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June 2009

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## Introduction

Lake George is a 28,160-acre body of water bordered by Warren, Washington and Essex counties in the eastern Adirondacks. It is a two-story lake which means that it contains both coldwater and warmwater game fish. A program designed to monitor the lake's coldwater salmonid fishery, through the help of volunteer angler cooperators, was begun in the early 1970's. These volunteers have maintained detailed diaries of their open water salmonid fishing trips and have gathered a large amount of angler catch data. Beginning in 2009, we are asking warmwater anglers to record their catches in separate warmwater diaries. These data will be compiled separately and a report distributed to participants.

This report summarizes Lake George landlocked salmon and lake trout angler diary data and landlocked salmon age and growth data collected during 2008.

If you were a cooperator during the 2008 fishing season, your results are listed beside your assigned angler number in the tables presenting individual catch and fishing effort statistics. Your angler cooperator number is located on the left hand side of the address label on the envelope in which this information was sent, and on your 2009 angler diaries. In order to facilitate comparison of data between years, angler diary cooperator numbers will not be changed, so be sure to keep your angler number confidential.

The angler diary program has been an extremely effective and worthwhile program. Those anglers who have participated should be proud of their effort knowing that their time has led to more effective management of Lake George.

If you maintained a diary, but find no reference to your angler cooperator number in any of the attached tables, it is possible that the data which you submitted were not used because an essential ingredient (such as record of the starting and finishing times of unsuccessful trips, etc.) was lacking or the diary arrived too late to be included in the summaries. In order to be included in the report, diaries must be received by the end of February of the following year. Please contact Emily Zollweg at the NYSDEC office in Warrensburg or phone (518) 623-1264 or send email to: [eczollwe@gw.dec.state.ny.us](mailto:eczollwe@gw.dec.state.ny.us) if your data were erroneously omitted or if you have other questions.

When reading the tables, please be aware that the "Number of Angler Trips" and the "Number of Hours Fished" refers to the cooperator plus any fishing guests who accompanied that cooperator and have data recorded in his or her diary.

## Results

### Participating Angler Cooperators

During 2008, 25 cooperators, out of over 100 who were sent a diary or report, returned usable diaries. Thank You Very Much to all our active participants! For those of you who indicated they wanted their diaries returned, they were returned after data entry was completed. My thanks to the following angler cooperators who returned diaries:

Name		
<i>Myron Chamberlain</i>	<i>Bruno Greenlaw</i>	<i>John Shaninger</i>
<i>Raoul Charbonneau</i>	<i>Eric Guby</i>	<i>Ken Sheffield</i>
<i>Mark Clemente</i>	<i>Jeff Johnson</i>	<i>Robert Sledd</i>
<i>Andy Corona</i>	<i>Walter Kendall Sr.</i>	<i>Mike Strutz</i>
<i>John Coulter</i>	<i>Robert J. Koshgarian</i>	<i>Bob Tansey</i>
<i>Walter H. Curren</i>	<i>Dan Ladd</i>	<i>Bill West</i>
<i>Barry M. Daniell</i>	<i>Barry Leeds</i>	<i>Steve Yaw</i>
<i>Edward Donoghue</i>	<i>Pat Mannix</i>	
<i>Edward L. DuFour</i>	<i>Robert Murray Jr.</i>	

### Anglers Exclusively Targeting Lake Trout or Landlocked Salmon

In this report catch and creel rates are calculated separately for lake trout and landlocked salmon. Excluding trips that targeted both lake trout and landlocked salmon creates tables that provide “exclusive” catch data. Thus, the angler was focused on catching one species during that trip. Anglers that did not indicate a species preference or who fished for both landlocked salmon and lake trout during the same fishing trip are included in the total catch tables.

Although “exclusive” reporting criteria reduce the number of angler trips used for certain calculations, it may be a more accurate representation of lake trout or landlocked salmon catch or creel rates. It also provides a consistent method to compare catch and creel rates with other waters.

### Length Frequency Distribution Sample Sizes

Sample sizes reported on length frequency distribution graphics in this report do not correspond with sample sizes in the catch summary tables. Sample sizes reported in length frequency tables are based on all fish caught that had recorded lengths. Sample sizes reported in the catch summary tables are based on the number of fish caught that could be associated with an angling effort (catch per hour). Some angler diary cooperators forget to record the time that fishing started or ended. Fishing trips with missing effort data are excluded from the catch rate summaries; however, fish captured during excluded trips are used in length frequency distributions and in mean length summaries.

### Overall Salmonid Catch and Creel Rates

Twenty-five angler cooperators fished for salmonids at least once during 2008. They provided records for a total of 968 fishing trips totaling 3751 hours over 472 days (Table 1). The mean length of a fishing trip was 3.9 hours.

Cooperators landed a total of 1941 lake trout and landlocked salmon in 2008 compared to 1,917 in 2007 and 3,154 in 2006. The salmonid catch rate was 0.52 or one salmonid every 1.9 hours in 2008. Anglers creeled 323 (16.6 %) of the lake trout and salmon caught in 2008 compared to 353 (18.5%) in 2007, 361 (11.4%) in 2006, and 144 (9.3%) in 2005. The salmonid creel rate in 2008 was 0.09/hour versus 0.02/hour in 2003.

TABLE 1. LAKE GEORGE ANGLER DIARY COOPERATOR FISHING RESULTS FOR THE 2008 FISHING SEASON, ALL SALMONIDS, ACTUAL CREEL RATE.

BASIN	ANGLER NUMBER	NUMBER DAYS FISHED	NUMBER ANGLER TRIPS	NUMBER HOURS FISHED	MEAN TRIP LENGTH	NUMBER CAUGHT	CATCH PER HOUR	NUMBER CREELED	CREELED PER HOUR
North	155	17	23.0	121.00	5.26	12	.10	1	.01
	157	11	15.0	31.08	2.07	25	.80	3	.10
	173	13	15.0	11.92	.79	3	.25	0	.00
	222	25	55.0	220.00	4.00	115	.52	33	.15
	237	1	2.0	13.00	6.50	5	.38	2	.15
	330	2	4.0	8.00	2.00	4	.50	2	.25
	331	48	109.0	463.33	4.25	125	.27	0	.00
	385	37	40.0	82.50	2.06	33	.40	13	.16
	394	1	2.0	9.00	4.50	5	.56	3	.33
	400	1	1.0	4.00	4.00	0	.00	0	0
	401	3	9.0	40.50	4.50	8	.20	2	.05
	402	1	2.0	6.00	3.00	3	.50	0	.00
	404	4	5.0	16.50	3.30	11	.67	4	.24
	409	30	57.0	250.83	4.40	81	.32	19	.08
	410	1	2.0	13.00	6.50	2	.15	0	.00
414	4	7.0	24.00	3.43	2	.08	0	.00	
SUBTOTAL		199	348.0	1314.7	3.78	434	.33	82	.06
South	137	19	22.0	61.50	2.80	47	.76	6	.10
	148	24	25.0	68.33	2.73	53	.78	1	.01
	155	3	3.0	16.00	5.33	5	.31	0	.00
	330	12	23.0	96.00	4.17	31	.32	7	.07
	351	14	45.0	193.00	4.29	58	.30	8	.04
	352	8	16.0	48.00	3.00	36	.75	14	.29
	354	152	400.0	1493.5	3.73	1095	.73	190	.13
	370	2	3.0	12.00	4.00	0	.00	0	0
	378	3	5.0	21.50	4.30	19	.88	0	.00
	393	5	7.0	16.50	2.36	0	.00	0	0
	400	6	20.0	121.00	6.05	5	.04	4	.03
	401	1	4.0	28.00	7.00	7	.25	3	.11
	402	5	13.0	64.50	4.96	18	.28	1	.02
	404	1	1.0	3.00	3.00	1	.33	0	.00
	407	5	10.0	47.00	4.70	16	.34	2	.04
409	1	2.0	11.50	5.75	5	.43	1	.09	
410	12	21.0	135.00	6.43	111	.82	4	.03	
SUBTOTAL		273	620.0	2436.3	3.93	1507	.62	241	.10
TOTAL		472	968.0	3751.0	3.88	1941	.52	323	.09

### Lake Trout

Twenty-two angler cooperators targeting lake trout landed a total of 1,807 lake trout in 2008 and had a catch rate of 0.52/hour (Table 2). Mean length of lake trout caught was 20.6 inches. Participating anglers creeled 301 (16.6%) of the lake trout caught in 2008. Mean length of lake trout creeled was 24.6 inches. In 2006, 18 cooperators caught 2,823 lake trout and had a catch rate of 0.62/hour. Figure 1 illustrates the 2008 angler diary cooperator lake trout length frequency distribution. Of 1,911 lake trout caught by all anglers, 591 were 23 inches or greater in length (30.9 %) and 1,037 were 21 inches or greater in length (54.3 %). The 1,911 lake trout measured had a mean length of 20.5 inches.

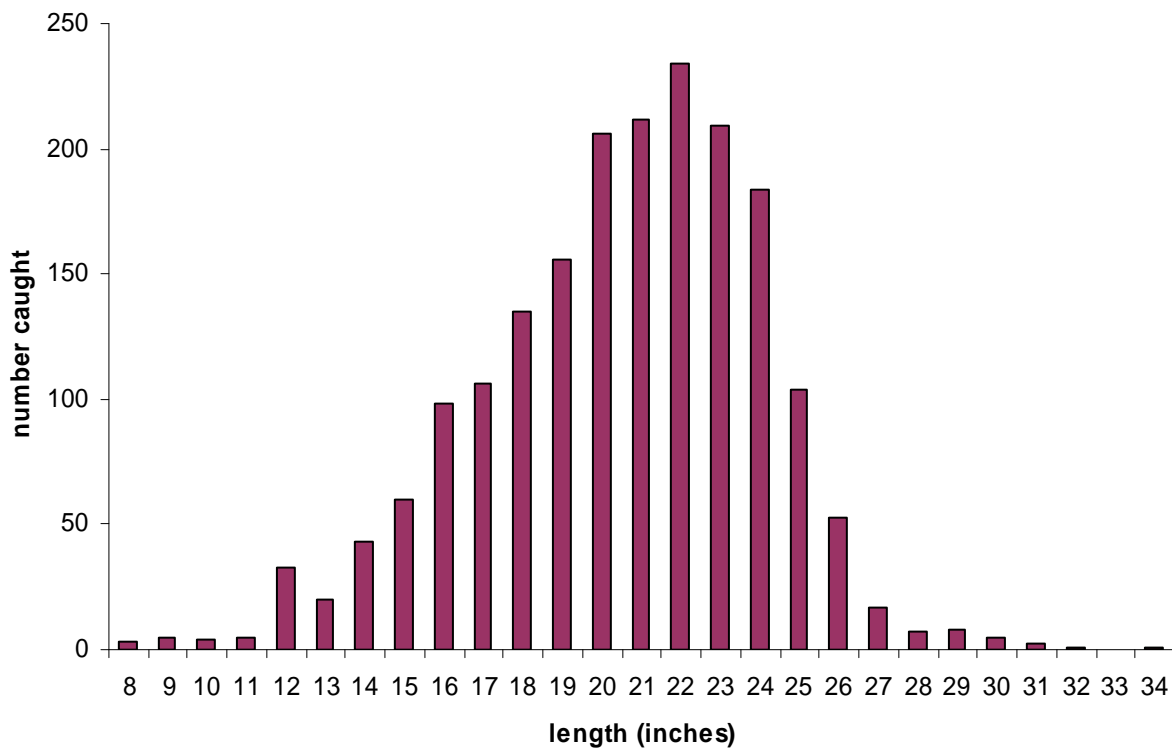


Figure 1. Length frequency distribution of lake trout caught by anglers in Lake George, 2008.

#### *Anglers Exclusively Targeting Lake Trout*

Twenty-one angler cooperators exclusively targeted lake trout 2008. The exclusive catch rate was 0.56/hour versus the overall rate of 0.52/hour, and the exclusive creel rate was 0.09 lake trout per hour versus 0.09/hour overall creel rate. Other catch statistics were similar between these two groups, so tables are not repeated here to save space.

TABLE 2. LAKE GEORGE ANGLER DIARY COOPERATOR FISHING RESULTS FOR THE 2008 FISHING SEASON, ACTUAL CREEL RATE OF ANGLERS TARGETING LAKE TROUT.

BASIN	NUMBER	NUMBER	NUMBER	NUMBER	MEAN	NUMBER	CATCH	NUMBER	CREELED	MEAN	MEAN
		DAYS	ANGLER	HOURS	TRIP	CAUGHT	PER	CREELED	PER	LENGTH	LENGTH
		FISHED	TRIPS	FISHED	LENGTH		HOURL	HOURL		CAUGHT	CREELED
North	157	9	12.0	27.33	2.28	25	.91	3	.11	21.40	26.17
	173	13	15.0	11.92	.79	3	.25	0	0	26.17	0
	222	25	55.0	220.00	4.00	115	.52	33	.15	22.28	24.15
	237	1	2.0	13.00	6.50	5	.38	2	.15	25.60	26.25
	330	2	4.0	8.00	2.00	4	.50	2	.25	24.00	26.00
	331	48	109.0	463.33	4.25	125	.27	0	0	19.19	0
	385	36	39.0	80.50	2.06	32	.40	12	.15	22.64	25.96
	394	1	2.0	9.00	4.50	5	.56	3	.33	23.70	25.25
	401	3	9.0	40.50	4.50	7	.17	1	.02	21.43	24.00
	402	1	2.0	6.00	3.00	3	.50	0	0	22.67	0
	404	4	5.0	16.50	3.30	11	.67	4	.24	22.86	25.38
	409	30	57.0	250.83	4.40	81	.32	19	.08	22.05	24.76
	410	1	2.0	13.00	6.50	2	.15	0	0	23.00	0
	414	4	7.0	24.00	3.43	2	.08	0	0	15.50	0
SUBTOTAL		178	320.0	1183.9	3.70	420	.35	79	.07	21.36	24.85
South	137	14	17.0	47.50	2.79	37	.78	4	.08	20.03	23.00
	330	12	23.0	96.00	4.17	29	.30	6	.06	21.60	25.67
	351	14	45.0	193.00	4.29	58	.30	8	.04	21.89	23.94
	352	8	16.0	48.00	3.00	36	.75	14	.29	21.29	24.61
	354	135	355.0	1419.5	4.00	1049	.74	176	.12	20.12	24.59
	370	2	3.0	12.00	4.00	0	.00	0	0	0	0
	378	3	5.0	21.50	4.30	19	.88	0	0	20.05	0
	393	5	7.0	16.50	2.36	0	.00	0	0	0	0
	400	5	19.0	117.00	6.16	4	.03	3	.03	23.25	26.67
	401	1	4.0	28.00	7.00	7	.25	3	.11	23.00	23.33
	402	5	13.0	64.50	4.96	15	.23	1	.02	22.63	27.00
	404	1	1.0	3.00	3.00	1	.33	0	0	18.50	0
	407	5	10.0	47.00	4.70	16	.34	2	.04	19.63	23.00
	409	1	2.0	11.50	5.75	5	.43	1	.09	21.05	23.25
	410	12	21.0	135.00	6.43	111	.82	4	.03	20.53	23.63
SUBTOTAL		223	541.0	2260.0	4.18	1387	.61	222	.10	20.33	24.5
TOTAL		401	861.0	3443.9	4.00	1807	.52	301	.09	20.57	24.63

### *Catch Rate for Legal Sized Lake Trout*

An additional analysis was performed to discover the lake trout creel rate if every fish over the minimum size limit of 23 inches were kept. For 2008, the theoretical maximum creel rate would have been 0.16/hour versus the 0.09/hour actually kept by cooperators. Thus, 1.8 times more lake trout could have been harvested than really occurred. Legal lake trout comprised 30.9% (587 of 1900) in 2008 and 33.6% of the angler catch in 2007 (603 of 1794); these are the highest rates in recent years. In 2005, legal lake trout comprised 21.6% of the angler catch; and in 2004, legal lake trout comprised 25.4% of the angler catch. In 2003, legal lake trout comprised only 14% of the total catch. If the lake trout size limit were lowered to the statewide size limit of 21 inches, 1037 lake trout or 0.28 fish/hour, could have been harvested.

### Landlocked Salmon

Twelve angler cooperators targeted landlocked salmon in 2008, catching a total of 35 landlocked Atlantic salmon (Table 3). Mean length of salmon caught was 18.1 inches. Cooperators spent approximately 977 hours pursuing salmon, which translates to a catch rate of 0.04 salmon/hour. Thus, it took an average of 25 hours to catch a salmon on Lake George in 2008. Twelve of the 35 salmon caught (34%) were creeled and these fish had an average length of 21.9 inches. Notably, all of the fish caught were in the south basin. Although the creel rate did not change much from 2007, the catch rate dropped to near the 2003 catch rate of 0.03/hour.

TABLE 3. LAKE GEORGE ANGLER DIARY COOPERATOR FISHING RESULTS FOR THE 2008 FISHING SEASON, ACTUAL CREEL RATE OF ANGLERS TARGETING LANDLOCKED SALMON.

BASIN	NUMBER	NUMBER	NUMBER	NUMBER	MEAN	NUMBER	CATCH	NUMBER	CREELED	MEAN	MEAN
		DAYS	ANGLER	HOURS	TRIP	CAUGHT	PER	CREELED	PER	LENGTH	LENGTH
		FISHED	TRIPS	FISHED	LENGTH	PER	HOURLY	PER	HOURLY	CAUGHT	CREELED
North	155	17	23.0	121.00	5.26	0	.00	0	0	0	0
	157	4	8.0	20.75	2.59	0	.00	0	0	0	0
	385	28	31.0	66.00	2.13	0	.00	0	0	0	0
	402	1	2.0	6.00	3.00	0	.00	0	0	0	0
SUBTOTAL		50	64.0	213.75	3.34	0	.00	0	0	0	0
South	137	19	22.0	61.50	2.80	2	.03	1	.02	16.50	18.00
	148	24	25.0	68.33	2.73	11	.16	1	.01	16.14	23.00
	155	3	3.0	16.00	5.33	0	.00	0	0	0	0
	330	11	21.0	90.00	4.29	2	.02	1	.01	16.50	21.00
	354	38	109.0	358.00	3.28	16	.04	8	.02	19.73	22.25
	370	1	1.0	5.00	5.00	0	.00	0	0	0	0
	393	3	5.0	10.00	2.00	0	.00	0	0	0	0
	400	4	13.0	78.00	6.00	1	.01	1	.01	23.00	23.00
	402	5	13.0	64.50	4.96	3	.05	0	0	17.33	0
	409	1	2.0	11.50	5.75	0	.00	0	0	0	0
SUBTOTAL		109	214.0	762.83	3.56	35	.05	12	.02	18.07	21.92
TOTAL		159	278.0	976.58	3.51	35	.04	12	.01	18.07	21.92

The 2008 angler diary cooperator landlocked salmon length frequency distribution is illustrated in Figure 2. This graph includes length data from all salmon caught by cooperators. Of 42 salmon caught, 23 were 18 inches or greater in length (55%). The 42 salmon caught had a mean length of 18.7 inches. Had all legal salmon been creeled; 23 fish would have been kept and the theoretical maximum creel rate would have been 0.02/hour for anglers targeting landlocked salmon.

Six angler cooperators focused some of their angling time exclusively fishing for landlocked salmon in 2008 (Table 4). They fished a total of 299 hours and caught 20 salmon for a catch rate of 0.07/hour. The 2006 exclusive catch rate was 0.35/hour and the 2003 exclusive catch rate for salmon was only 0.03/hour; thus there was an increase in salmon catch rates in recent years which was not realized in 2008. Three of the 20 salmon caught in 2008 were creeled, yielding a creel rate of 0.01/hour. The mean length caught was 16.2 inches, while the mean length creeled by anglers fishing only for salmon was 22.0 inches.

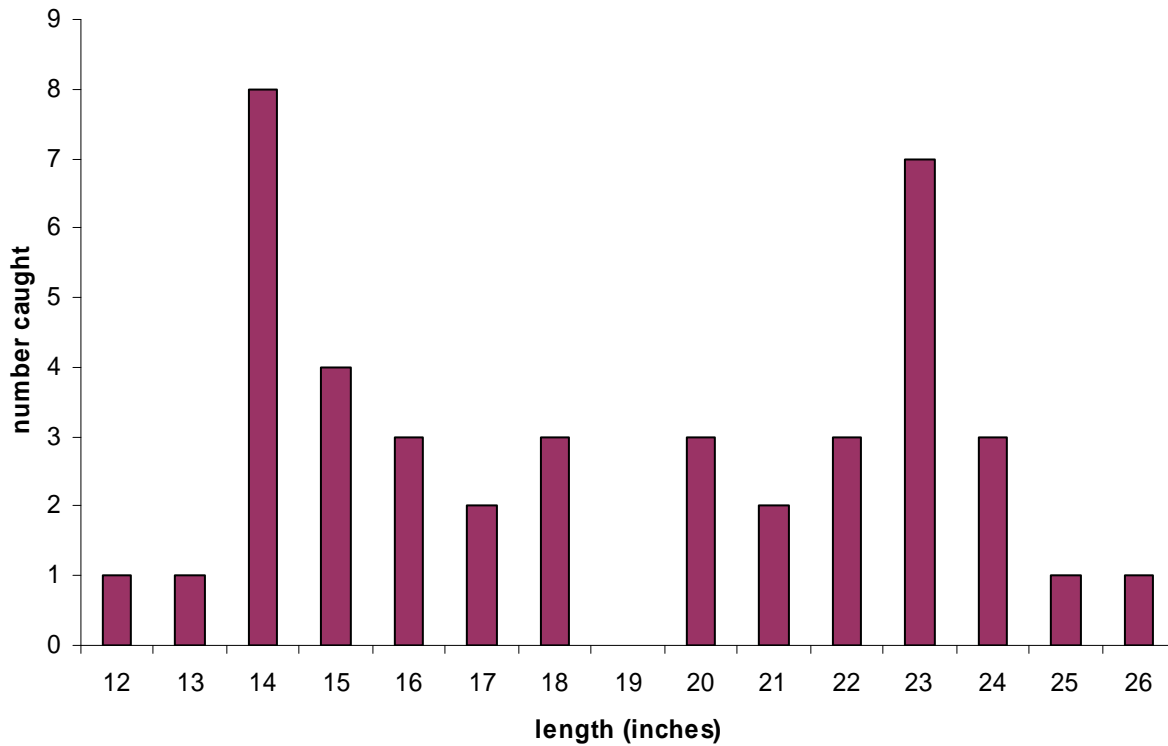


Figure 2. Length frequency distribution of landlocked salmon caught by anglers in Lake George, 2008.

TABLE 4. LAKE GEORGE ANGLER DIARY COOPERATOR FISHING RESULTS FOR THE 2008 OPEN WATER FISHING SEASON OF ANGLERS TARGETING LANDLOCKED SALMON EXCLUSIVELY.

BASIN	NUMBER	NUMBER	NUMBER	NUMBER	MEAN	NUMBER	CATCH	NUMBER	CREELED	MEAN	MEAN
		DAYS	ANGLER	HOURS	TRIP	CAUGHT	PER	CREELED	PER	LENGTH	LENGTH
		FISHED	TRIPS	FISHED	LENGTH	PER	HOUR	PER	HOUR	CAUGHT	CREELED
North	155	17	23.0	121.00	5.26	0	.00	0	0	0	0
	157	2	3.0	3.75	1.25	0	.00	0	0	0	0
	385	1	1.0	2.00	2.00	0	.00	0	0	0	0
SUBTOTAL		20	27.0	126.75	4.69	0	.00	0	0	0	0
South	137	5	5.0	14.00	2.80	1	.07	0	0	15.00	0
	148	24	25.0	68.33	2.73	11	.16	1	.01	16.14	23.00
	155	3	3.0	16.00	5.33	0	.00	0	0	0	0
	354	17	45.0	74.00	1.64	8	.11	2	.03	16.43	21.50
SUBTOTAL		49	78.0	172.33	2.21	20	.12	3	.02	16.18	22.00
TOTAL		69	105.0	299.08	2.85	20	.07	3	.01	16.18	22.00

## Salmon Stocking

Approximately 38,000 healthy yearling salmon were stocked in Lake George during 2008 (Table 5). A total of 35,600 salmon yearlings were stocked in late-May 2008. The spring yearlings were not marked. In addition about 3,000, 9.5" -inch fall yearlings (Left ventral fin clip– bottom rear on left side) reared at the Warren County Hatchery were stocked in October. The hypothesis is that stocking larger salmon will increase annual salmon survival.

Table 5. Lake George Landlocked Salmon Stocking History, 1999-2008.

Year	Stocking Policy	Date	Number Stocked	Number per pound	Mean Length At Stocking	Fin Clip
1999	34,000		34,000	9.1	6.9"	
2000	34,000		34,000	10.4	6.5"	
2001	17,000	May	17,000		7.0"	AD
2001	17,000	June	17,000		7.6"	None
2001	3,000	October	3,100		10.5"	LV
2002	17,000	April	17,000		6.5"	AD
2002	17,000	June	17,000		7.0"	None
2002	3,100	October	3,100		10.0?	LV
2003	17,000	April	17,000	9.1	6.5"	AD
2003	17,000	June	17,000	6.6	7.5"	None
2003	3,000	October	3,104	2.85	9.6"	LV
2004	17,000	April	17,000	10.2	6.5"	None
2004	17,000	June	20,000	8.4	7.0"	AD
2004	3,000	October	2,500	1.9	11.5"	LV
2005	17,000	May	17,000	10.1	6.5"	AD
2005	17,000	May	17,000	10.1	6.5"	None
2005	3,000	October	3,014		10"	LV
2006	34,000	May	30,000	7.7	7"	None
2006	3,000	September	2940	3.0	9.8"	LV
2007	34,000	May	35,160	9.6	6.5"	None
2007	3,000	November	2,964	3.8	9.6"	LV
2008	34,000	May	35,640	9.1	6.5"	None
2008	3,000	October	2,826	3.0	9.5"	LV

## Lake Trout

### *Anglers Exclusively Targeting Lake Trout*

North Basin creel rates were stable from 1987 through 1994 at 0.07 to 0.12 per hour, respectively, but remained below 0.10 per hour from 1996-2008 (Figure 3). It is known, however, that anglers are releasing legal size lake trout, which lowers the creel rate. For example, in 1995 participating North Basin cooperators targeting lake trout released about 59% of the legal lake trout they caught, while in 2004 anglers released about 75% percent of the legal lake trout they caught. In 2007, all anglers kept 51% of legal lake trout caught. It is apparent that the lower creel rate was due to a change in angler habits which may have changed again. In 2008, the creel rate in the North Basin was 0.07 lake trout per hour, based on the reported

activities of 13 anglers.

The North Basin exclusive lake trout catch/hour dropped again in 2008 to 0.36 lake trout/hour versus 0.64/hour in 2004 (Figure 3). The maximum possible creel rate would have been 0.12/hr in 2007 and 2008 compared to 0.19/hour in 2006, 0.16/hour in 2004 and 0.07/hour in 2003.

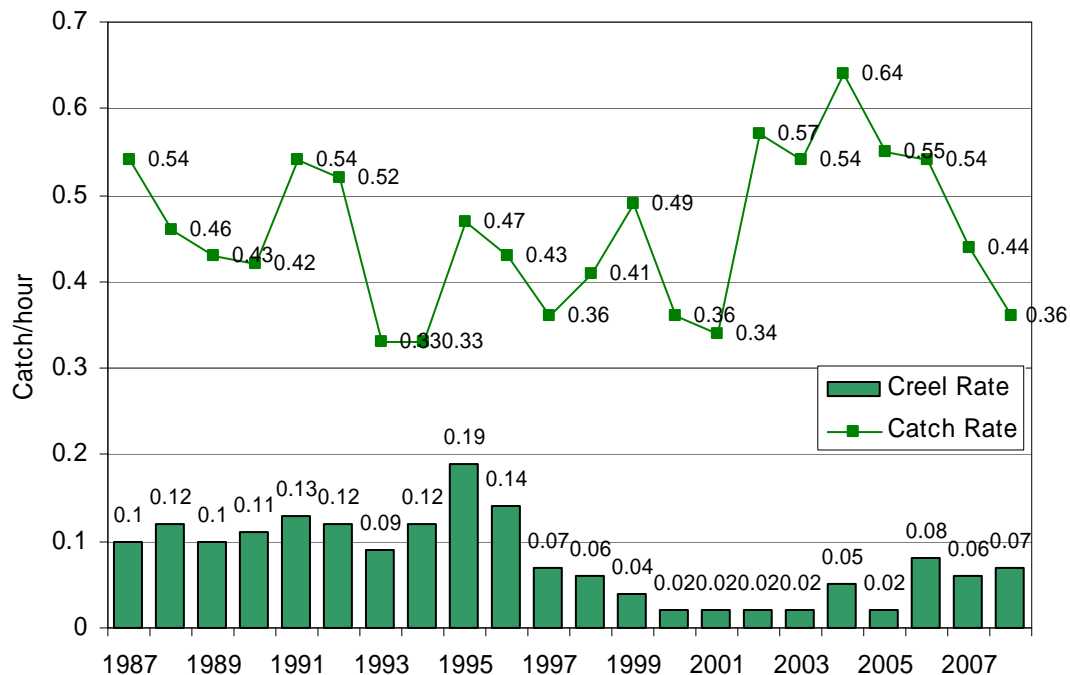


Figure 3. North Basin exclusively targeted lake trout catch and creel rates between 1987 and 2008.

South Basin creel rates were relatively stable from 1987 through 1999 at 0.02 to 0.18 per hour (Figure 4). It is known, however, that anglers are releasing legal size lake trout, which lowers the creel rate. It is apparent that the lower creel rate was due to a change in angler habits. In 2008, twelve diary cooperators fished the South Basin exclusively for lake trout. In 2008, the creel rate in the South Basin was calculated at 0.10 lake trout per hour, which is comparable with previous creel rates in this basin.

The South Basin exclusive lake trout catch/hour was relatively high in 2008 at 0.69 lake trout/hour (Figure 4). The maximum possible creel rate would have been 0.18/hour in 2008.

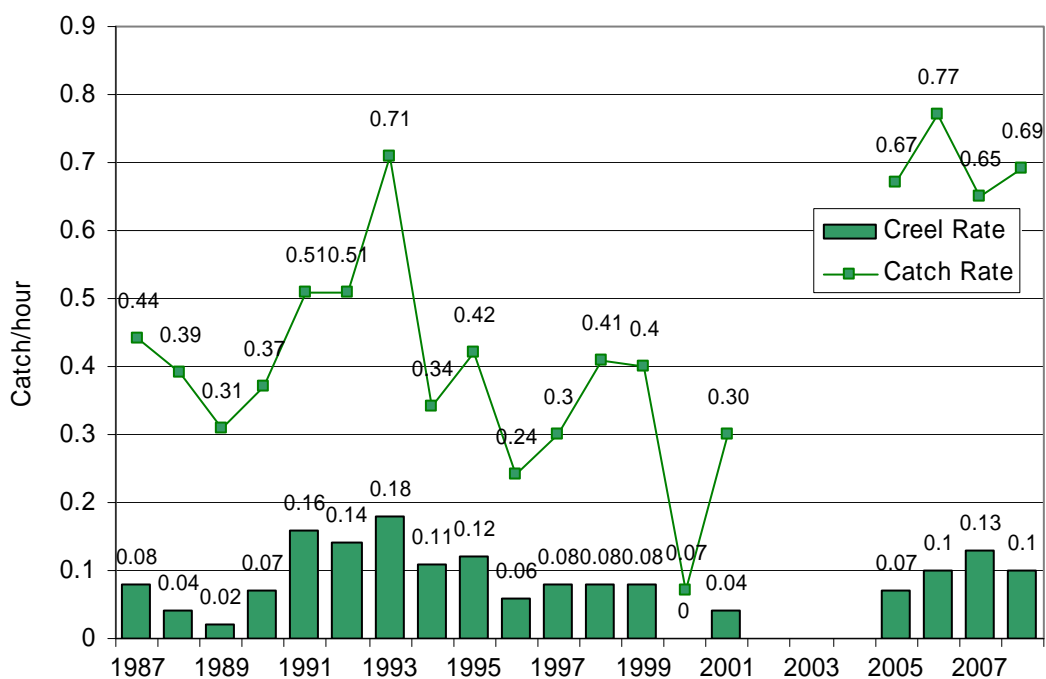


Figure 4. South Basin exclusively targeted lake trout catch and creel rates between 1987 and 2008. Data for 2002- 2004 omitted due to lack of data.

## Conclusion

### Natural Recruitment

Naturally recruited lake trout dominate the population in Lake George; however, it is not possible to determine the percentage of wild fish based on cooperators data. Three fin clipped lake trout ranging from 20-22 inches were reported in 2008. Lake trout were last stocked in Lake George in 1998. Due to the decreasing percentage of stocked fish in the lake trout population, it is no longer necessary to track clipped lake trout in Lake George.

### Landlocked Salmon

The Lake George salmon program has a long tradition and history. Good growth is vital to maintain the quality of the landlocked salmon fishery. Slow growth caused by a weak smelt population or by over stocking would produce a decrease in the average size of salmon as well as a decrease in the number of larger salmon in the fishery. The 2008 season was not good for salmon fishing, despite good smelt runs in 2006 and 2007. Better ice conditions in 2007-2008 may have improved the winter salmon fishing. Very few of the angler diary participants are winter anglers, so that fishery is poorly represented in these data.

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Salmon have a relatively short life span up to age four, but typically live to age three. The most abundant age class for the fishery is age two. To provide the best angling, salmon must reach 18 inches by fall at age two. Salmon are quickly harvested during years when two-year-old and older salmon are present as a result of good year class survival.

In 2008, the exclusive catch rate for legal salmon was 0.07/hour. That rate is still well below the catch rate objective of 0.12 - 0.18 per hour established in 1998, but better than the 2003 catch rate of 0.01/hour. Angler cooperators efforts in 2004 indicate a renewed interest in the fishery, which continued in 2005 to 2007. In recent years, these salmon were stocked with the assistance of the Lake George Fishing Alliance, whose members include several angler diary cooperators. Stocking these fish by boat in deep water may have increased their survival in 2006 and 2007. This effort will be continued.

Forage problems may be limiting salmon survival in Lake George. Rainbow smelt are a preferred food item for salmon and this office has received reports of strong smelt runs in recent years in most lake tributaries; however reports from spring 2009 were mixed. The office also received calls from anglers who were catching significant numbers of smelt while ice fishing and were wondering whether they are legal to keep for personal consumption (they aren't, in Lake George). So, there are indications of good smelt population numbers in recent years. As water conditions in streams vary from year to year, and smelt are so short lived and fecund, their populations naturally fluctuate dramatically. This instability in population numbers can translate into fewer salmon surviving in poor smelt years.

Predation is another obvious source of mortality and large lake trout can certainly forage on yearling or older salmon. The catch rate for exclusively targeted lake trout was the highest on record in 2006 at 0.65/hour and only slightly lower in 2007 at 0.53/hour. In 2008, the catch rate for exclusively targeted lake trout dropped again to 0.35 lake trout /hour. The catch rate for legal sized lake trout (>23 inches) was 0.16/hour. However, the creel rate of only 0.09/hour clearly shows that cooperators are releasing many of the legal lake trout they catch. This was an improvement over 2003; however, when virtually all the legal lake trout were released.

If the cooperator trend for releasing lake trout extends to most coldwater anglers in Lake George, then a large predator base is being established in the lake. Anglers cannot expect a quality landlocked salmon program in addition to a trophy lake trout fishery. Either more anglers need to keep their catch of legal lake trout or they should reduce their expectations for the salmon fishery.

Salmon survival may also be partially dependent on the size at the time of stocking. It is believed that stocking limited numbers of larger yearling and fall yearling salmon may reduce survival variability. Various salmon management alternatives have been considered to try to improve salmon catch rates and survival. These alternatives include stocking limited numbers of large, fall yearling salmon. The hypothesis is that salmon stocked at a larger size in October may experience less mortality than salmon stocked in May. All spring salmon are stocked at the end of May at about 7". These fish are dispersed in deeper areas of the lake with the help of angler cooperators and the Lake George Fishing Alliance. Many thanks to those who participated!

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Approximately, three thousand yearlings are transferred to the Warren County Hatchery in June each year from Adirondack Hatchery. These fish are stocked in late October as (left ventral) fin-clipped advanced fall yearlings. These fish represent approximately 10% of the salmon stocked in Lake George. Two (6%) of the 35 salmon caught by anglers in 2008 were fall yearlings. In 2008, 3 of 10 (30%) salmon caught in DEC autumn survey nets were fall yearlings.

### **Lake Trout**

Lake trout catch rates are high overall and there is some indication that average lake trout size has declined in recent years; however, growth is still very good compared to other lakes in the Adirondacks. This could be due to increased harvest of legal fish – which is not indicated by diary data or by reduced growth rates due to large population size. Lake trout growth rates were last evaluated in summer 2005. Juvenile lake trout recruitment appears to be satisfactory in both basins of the lake without the aid of stocking.

### **Diary Cooperator Program**

Declining participation in the angler diary program is a great concern. Only one cooperator fished exclusively for lake trout in the South Basin from 2002-2004. This low sample size made comparisons between the basins unreliable and as a consequence, statistics from each basin were not computed for those years. However, in recent years, more anglers are reporting fishing for lake trout exclusively in the southern zone which makes these comparisons possible. We appreciate the assistance of these anglers and continue to seek means to increase the number of participating diary cooperators. If you know an angler that is interested in participating in the angler diary program please have them contact Emily Zollweg at (518) 623-1264.

## **Recommendations**

1. Actively seek new angler cooperators to increase the number of active participating angler diary cooperators to 75 or more.
2. Encourage angler cooperators to pay particular attention to which target species check boxes they check on the diary pages. If you are a cooperator that fishes for landlocked salmon you should check the landlocked salmon (LLS) check box even though you may occasionally catch a lake trout while fishing for salmon. If you are fishing for lake trout you should check the lake trout (LT) check box even though you may occasionally catch a landlocked salmon while fishing for lake trout.