

MARANACOOK LAKE

Readfield and Winthrop Twps., Kennebec County
U.S.G.S. Augusta, Maine

Fishes

Brown trout	Smelt
Lake trout (togue)	Eel
Smallmouth bass	White sucker
Largemouth bass	Banded killifish
White perch	Freshwater scuplin
Yellow perch	Minnows - Golden shiner
Chain pickerel	Pumpkinseed sunfish
Hornpout (bullhead)	Redbreast sunfish

Physical Characteristics

Area - 1,673 acres	Temperatures
	Surface - 70 degrees F.
Maximum depth - 118 feet	100 feet - 43 degrees F.

Principal fishery: brown trout, lake trout, smallmouth bass, largemouth bass, white perch, pickerel, rainbow smelts.

Maranacook Lake's two basins have only a few things in common. Both basins, for instance, have excellent public landings and both are heavily developed with many summer homes, year-round residences and rental cabins. However, from a fishery management standpoint the lakes' two basins constitute distinctly different ecological types.

The North basin, located in Readfield, is about 700 acres in surface area and has a highly irregular shoreline. This basin is relatively shallow and homothermous (water temperatures are similar, top to bottom). Since the habitat in the North basin favors such species as smallmouth and largemouth bass, chain pickerel, and white and yellow perch; management emphasizes warmwater gamefish.

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On the other hand, management of the 1,000 acre South basin focuses on coldwater fish species. Maximum depth in this basin is 118 feet; it stratifies (a substantial drop in the temperature of the water column occurs, top to bottom) each summer and its large volume of cold water contains ample quantities of oxygen to support coldwater gamefish.

The primary goals of fishery management in the South basin of Maranacook Lake are toward providing a brown trout fishery based on annual plantings of fall yearlings and a lake trout fishery based on natural reproduction. The former goal seems to have been successful as anglers who fish the South basin have moderate success for brown trout. The outcome of the lake trout program is, as yet, in doubt.

Local anglers know that lake trout (togue) are not native to Maranacook. Our attempt to establish a self-perpetuating togue fishery in the South basin commenced in 1975 with the first of 5 planned annual stockings. The program was curtailed after 4 stockings since the excellent survival of the first few plantings led to a crash in the smelt population and a decline in lake trout and brown trout growth.

Termination of the lake trout stocking program, reduction in brown trout stocking rates, the stocking of smelt eggs, and a ban on smelt population and an improvement in growth rate of its salmonid (coldwater gamefish) population. Unfortunately, the excellent survival and growth of the initial plantings to togue led to greatly increased fishing pressure and heavy exploitation of the pond's togue population. Most of the togue we had stocked were removed from the lake by fishermen before the trout had reached sexual maturity. Consequently, although some large lake trout are still caught each year, evidence of lake trout spawning success has not yet been observed.

Currently, the Department is considering another attempt to establish a wild togue population in Maranacook. However, such a program would have little chance of success unless very restrictive regulations are established to prevent the removal of lake trout until they have had the opportunity to spawn.

The improvement in Maranacook's smelt population has resulted in the development of a hook-and-line fishery for smelts in the South basin. Anglers are advised that the taking of smelts in Maranacook is limited to hook and line and the sale of smelts is forbidden without possession of a bait dealers license.

Anglers are urged to assist the Department in monitoring our Maranacook Lake management program by keeping a record of their fishing efforts. Record booklets suitable for maintaining a fishing diary are available, free of charge, upon request to the Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife, Augusta, Maine.