

Analysis of Fish and Habitat Data Collected from Michigan's Streams by Statewide Stream Status and Trends Program Surveys

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Background

Have you ever wondered how, with tens of thousands of miles of streams and rivers throughout the state, Fisheries Division fulfills its mission to protect and enhance Michigan's aquatic life and habitats for the benefit of current and future generations? It's not surprising that fulfilling our mission is a challenging task given the sheer number of streams and rivers in the state. While these diverse natural resources continue to provide a number of different benefits to people, their long-term quality is threatened by an ever-growing list of disturbances. The sound management needed to protect streams and rivers from these threats, and to conserve them for future generations, depends upon the availability of quickly accessible fish and habitat information that assesses their current condition and describes how they are changing over time. Collecting, analyzing, and sharing that information are all objectives of Fisheries Division's Stream Status and Trends Program, an effort initiated over 10 years ago as part of a broader resource inventory plan aimed to address Michigan's inland fisheries management needs.

What are the current key results?

Fisheries Division's Stream Status and Trends Program was initiated during the spring of 2002. This effort continued to use standardized sampling methods in an effort to collect and evaluate stream data from a statewide perspective. These data included fisheries information from electrofishing, habitat measurements, and water quality sampling that will monitor statewide status and trends of streams and evaluate management activities (Photos 1 and 2). In 2014-15, we continued to assist in coordinating fish and habitat surveys, worked with other Fisheries Division personnel to improve the central database used to store all SSTP data, developed an online data viewer for the public to use, and responded to a range of internal and external requests for data and analysis.



Photo 1. A large Brown Trout collected during Fisheries Division's surveys.



Photo 2. A large Brook Trout collected during Fisheries Division's surveys.

Where can I find the results?

Results and analyses from many individual stream and river surveys are published by the Michigan Department of Natural Resources Fisheries Division as Status of the Fishery Resource reports. Fisheries Division also publishes comprehensive Stream Status and Trends Program summary reports every 6 years. All of these reports can be found by visiting <http://www.michigan.gov/dnrfishing>. In addition, annual survey results from wild trout and smallmouth bass index stations across the state can be found by using Fisheries Division's new Stream Fish Population Trend Viewer web application: www.mcgi.state.mi.us/fishpop.

What does this project do for fisheries managers and anglers?

The Stream Status and Trends Program provides fisheries managers the baseline information needed to guide management actions such as regulation changes or habitat protection and fulfill our vision to provide world-class freshwater fishing opportunities, supported by healthy aquatic environments, which enhance the quality of life in Michigan.