

HORSERACE PONDS
T2 R11, T3 R11, Piscataquis Co.
U.S.G.S. Harrington Lake, Me.

Fishes

Brook trout (squaretail)

Minnows

Redbelly dace

Physical Characteristics

Area — 50 acres

Temperatures

Maximum depth — 48 feet

Surface — 75°F.

45 feet — 43°F.

Principal Fishery - Brook trout

The Horserace Ponds are located nearly half way between the West Branch of the Penobscot River and Rainbow Lake. Hills forested with spruce, fir, white pine, paper birch and aspen lie to the north and south of the ponds. Large rocks that form the talus of a sheer granite cliff on the hill to the north extend to the water's edge on the lower pond. Huge moss and fern-covered boulders, some larger than an automobile, lie in the dense spruce forest on the eastern end of these waters. This provides an exceptionally beautiful setting for these wilderness trout ponds.

The small upper pond is connected to the larger lower pond by a shallow, rocky thoroughfare. Both ponds contain exceptionally clear, high quality water. Conditions are ideal for supporting the wild population of brook trout. Large rocks all around the shore of the lower pond provide many good locations from which to fish. The bottom of the lower pond drops off sharply quite close to the shore.

A small minnow species, the redbelly dace, is the only other fish present. These fish are abundant along the immediate shoreline, but provide little competition for brook trout. The larger trout do utilize them as a source of food.

There are no permanent tributaries. The outlet flows through a rocky area for several hundred feet below the ponds, then into an old beaver flowage. The amount of brook trout spawning and nursery area immediately below these waters is very limited. Natural reproduction of trout in the Horserace Ponds must occur

in spring seeps around the shore.

Beyond the beaver flowage the outlet brook flows through the forest over a gradient that ranges from slight to very steep. A good trout population exists in this brook, but it is unlikely that many fish work their way into these ponds. The passage of other fish species from the West Branch of the Penobscot River into the Horserace Ponds is prevented by the areas with a steep gradient.

The Horserace Ponds will be managed for their population of small to medium-sized wild brook trout. The use or possession of live fish as bait is presently prohibited. This regulation prevents the introduction of new fish species that could compete with trout.

Access to the Horserace Ponds is by a trail that closely follows the outlet brook. In spite of the uphill hike of 1 ¼ miles to reach the ponds, angler use is quite high. Nevertheless, they continue to provide good fishing. The existing 8-fish bag limit appears adequate to protect the fishery.

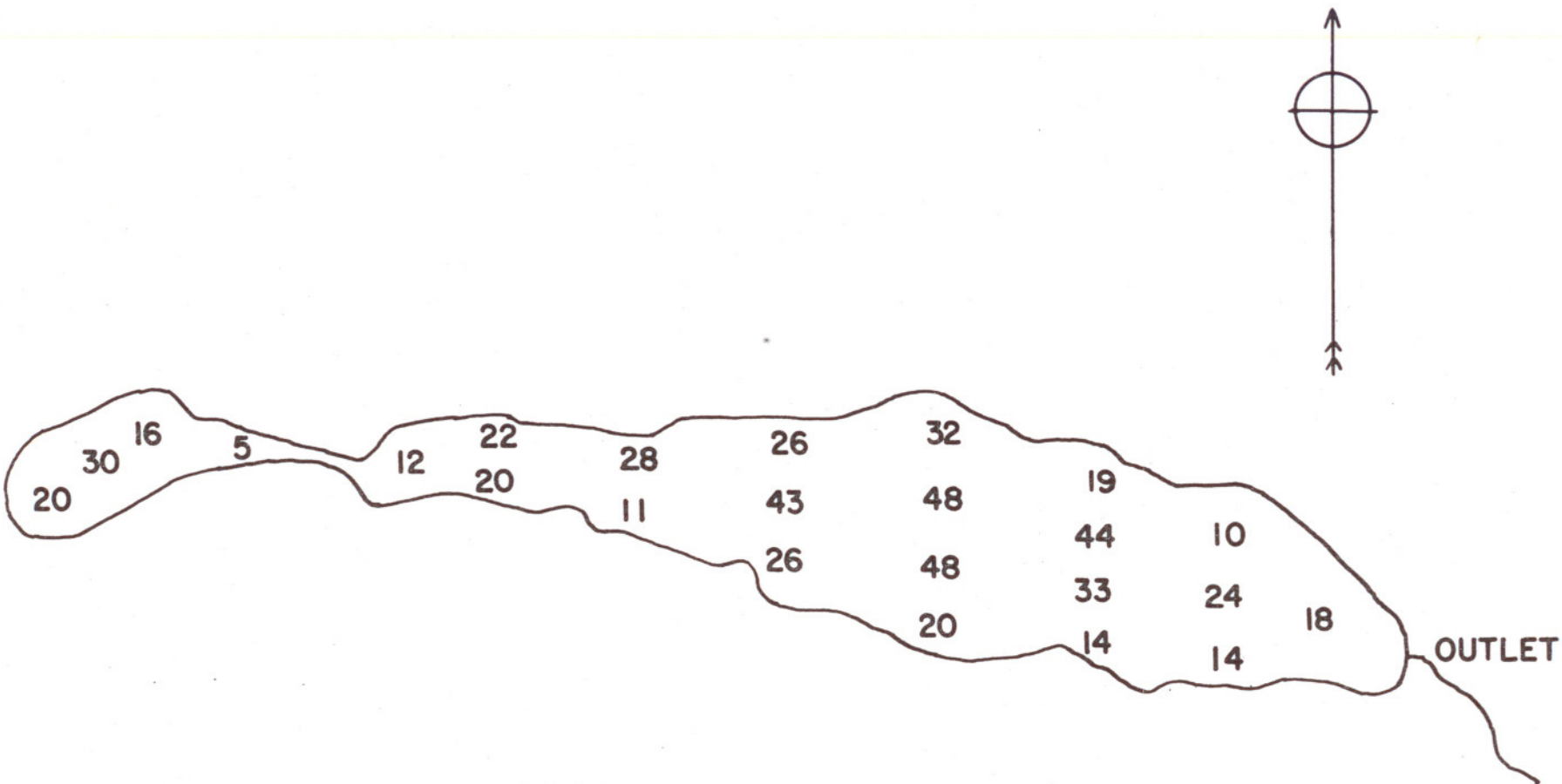
A campsite is located at the eastern end of the lower pond. Some litter is associated with this campsite. It is unfortunate that the beauty of the area has been disturbed by the irresponsible acts of a few individuals.

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AREA 50 ACRES

