



# WISCONSIN DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

## Fisheries Information Sheet

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**STREAM:** South Fork of the White River

**COUNTY:** Bayfield

**YEAR:** 2025

### Introduction

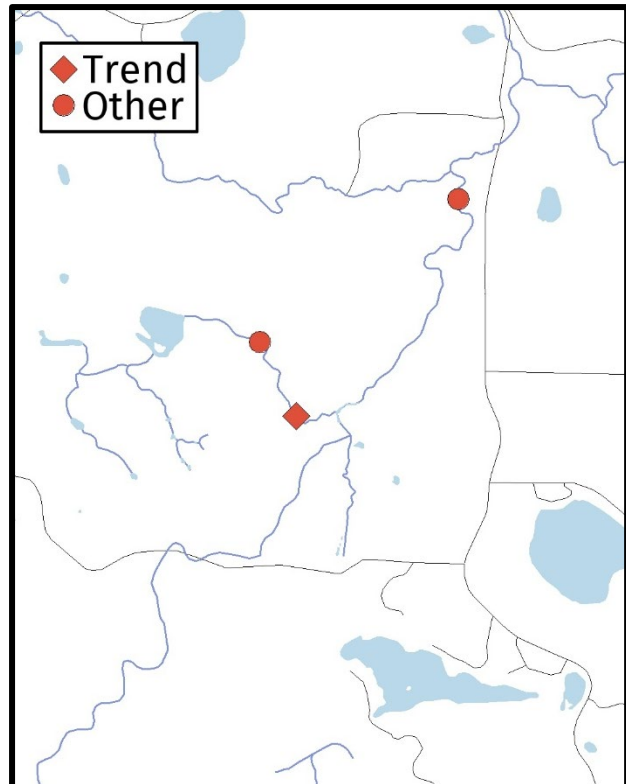
Stream electrofishing surveys were conducted on the South Fork of the White River (WBIC 2904200) in Bayfield County during summer of 2025. Survey sites included the annual trend site upstream of the confluence with the unnamed tributary from the south and other sites upstream of the confluence with the West Fork of the White River and Downstream of Lake Two. All species were collected at each site. Species observed included brown trout, brook trout, tiger trout, brook stickleback, central mudminnow, johnny darter, longnose dace, northern brook lamprey, northern redbelly dace and white sucker.

Among all sites, catch rates averaged 3,584 brown trout per mile, 1,214 brook trout per mile and 7 tiger trout per mile.

There were 1,577 brown trout captured and ranged from 1.6 to 22.1 inches with an average of 5.4 inches. There were 534 brook trout captured and ranged from 1.6 to 10.7 inches with an average of 3.3 inches. Three tiger trout were captured, their lengths were 3.7, 3.9, and 8.4 inches.

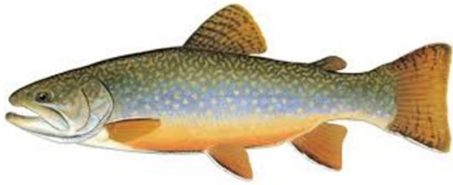
### Trend Site

The South Fork of the White River upstream of the unnamed tributary from the south has been sampled annually since 2007 with a DC towable barge stream shocker to assess trends in populations over time. Comparisons were made with previous surveys and the statewide 50<sup>th</sup> percentile for Class I trout streams, which is depicted as a dashed line.



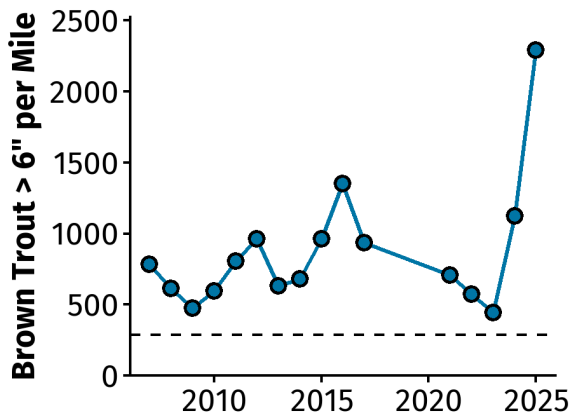
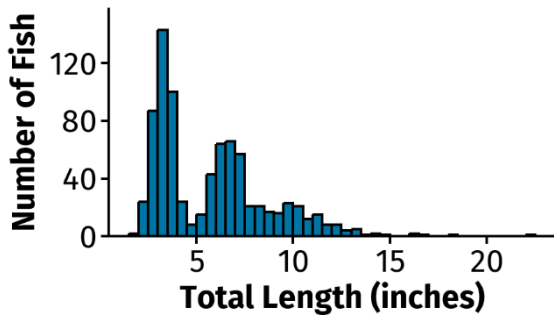
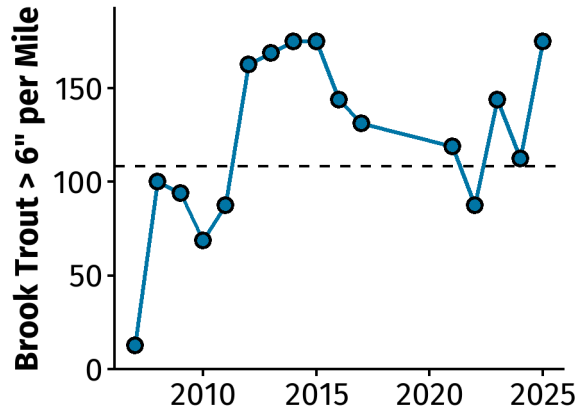
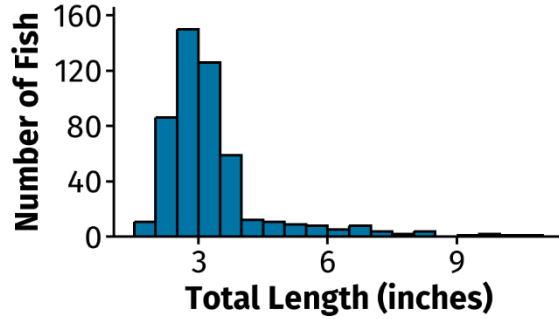
*Map of electrofishing sites on the South Fork of the White River.*

## BROOK TROUT



There were 500 brook trout captured, and length ranged from 1.6 to 10.6 inches. Catch rate of brook trout 6 inches and larger (blue dots) was higher than recent years and around the 60<sup>th</sup> percentile for Class I trout streams statewide.

# Captured Per Mile (all sizes)	3,125
% of Brook Trout $\geq 6$ "	5.6%
% of Brook Trout $\geq 8$ "	1.8%



## BROWN TROUT



There were 813 brown trout captured, and length ranged from 1.8 to 22.1 inches. Catch rate of brown trout 6 inches and larger (blue dots) has increased significantly in 2025 and was around the 95<sup>th</sup> percentile for Class I trout streams statewide.

# Captured Per Mile (all sizes)	5,081
% of Brown Trout $\geq 6$ "	45.1%
% of Brown Trout $\geq 12$ "	3.2%

## OTHER SPECIES

Three tiger trout were captured, their lengths were 3.7, 3.9 and 8.4 inches. Other species captured included brook stickleback, johnny darter, longnose dace and northern redbelly dace.

## Other Sites

In addition to the trend site, two other sites were sampled on the South Fork of the White River in 2025. These sites are typically sampled every six years. Catch rates of both brook and brown trout are shown below with the percentiles for Class I trout streams statewide, rounded to the nearest 5<sup>th</sup> percentile, in parentheses.

SITE	BROOK TROUT/MILE				BROWN TROUT/MILE			
	ALL	<4"	≥6"	≥8"	ALL	<4"	≥6"	≥12"
Confluence with West Fork	20 (10 <sup>th</sup> )	7 (30 <sup>th</sup> )	7 (10 <sup>th</sup> )	0	2,073 (95 <sup>th</sup> )	847 (90 <sup>th</sup> )	640 (70 <sup>th</sup> )	73 (75 <sup>th</sup> )
Confl. with Unnamed Trib (Trend)	3,125 (95 <sup>th</sup> )	2,700 (95 <sup>th</sup> )	175 (60 <sup>th</sup> )	56 (70 <sup>th</sup> )	5,081 (95 <sup>th</sup> )	2,225 (95 <sup>th</sup> )	2,294 (95 <sup>th</sup> )	162 (90 <sup>th</sup> )
Downstream Lake Two	238 (50 <sup>th</sup> )	208 (70 <sup>th</sup> )	15 (15 <sup>th</sup> )	15 (40 <sup>th</sup> )	3,485 (95 <sup>th</sup> )	1,608 (95 <sup>th</sup> )	1,108 (85 <sup>th</sup> )	69 (75 <sup>th</sup> )

## Summary

The South Fork of the White River is an exceptional trout fishery for catchable-size brook trout and brown trout, with a chance at a trophy sized brown trout. It also serves as the most productive nursery stream for brown trout and brook trout in the White River watershed. Brown trout were the dominant species in the South Fork. The abundance of brook trout greater than 6 inches at the trend site was high, after a few years of lower abundance. Young of year brook trout abundance in 2025 was one of the highest in the state and the highest ever observed at this site. The abundance of brown trout over 6 inches in the trend site was near the 95<sup>th</sup> percentile for Class I trout streams in Wisconsin and the highest ever observed at this site. The catch rate of young of year brown trout has been decreasing since 2015 but increased substantially in 2025. More information on the South Fork of the White River and the rest of the White River watershed will be available in the upcoming comprehensive watershed survey report to be published in 2026.

*General fishing regulations for the South Fork of the White River in Bayfield County, Wisconsin.*

SPECIES	SEASON DATES	DAILY BAG LIMIT	SIZE LIMIT
Trout (Brown & Brook)	1 <sup>st</sup> Saturday in May to October 15 <sup>th</sup>	3 in total	8-inch minimum

For fisheries management questions about the South Fork of the White River contact:

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