



WISCONSIN DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

Fisheries Information Sheet

WATERBODY: White River

COUNTY: Bayfield

YEAR: 2025

Introduction

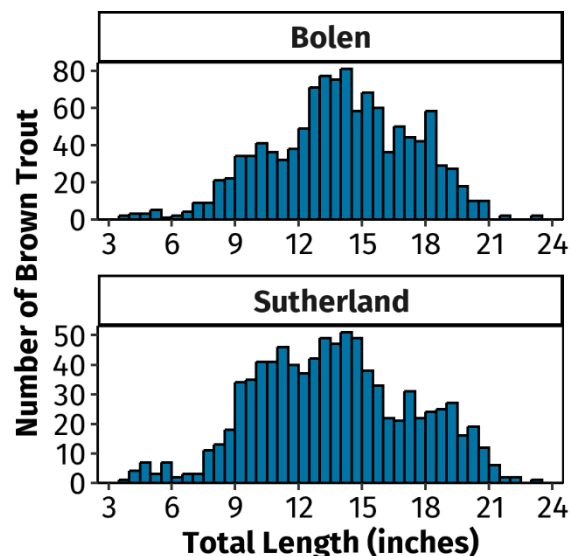
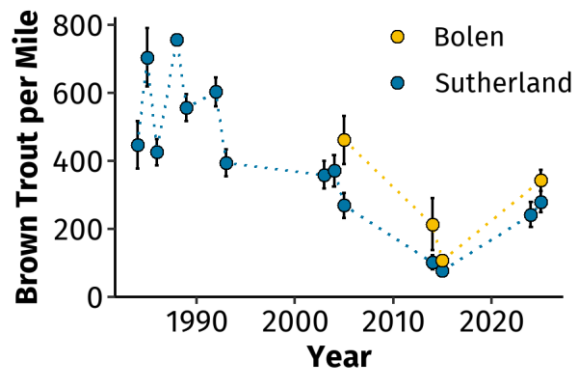
Two brown trout population estimates were conducted on the White River (WBIC 2892500) in Bayfield County in early 2025. On March 20th and 21st, a station starting at the Bolen Creek confluence and going downstream 4 miles was surveyed. On March 25th and 26th, a station starting at the Sutherland bridge and going downstream 4 miles was surveyed. On the first day of each survey, two mini boom shockers were used to capture trout. All brown trout were measured, marked with a fin clip, and released. The next day, the two mini boom shockers sampled the same stations, and a population estimate for each 4-mile station was calculated using the Lincoln-Peterson estimator with Chapman modification based on the number of fish marked (day 1), captured (day 2) and recaptured (day 2, with fin clip; Ricker 1975).

BROWN TROUT



There were 1,163 brown trout captured in the Bolen station (3.7 to 23.1 inches) and 885 brown trout captured in the Sutherland station (3.8 to 23.2 inches). The population estimate was 1,371 brown trout (343 per mile) at the Bolen station and 1,119 brown trout (280 per mile) at the Sutherland station. Brown trout abundance at both stations increased substantially since the 2015 surveys and size structure was better than it had been in at least 20 years, especially for trophy sized fish.

Station	Bolen	Sutherland
# Per Mile	343	280
Preferred (≥ 12 ")	71%	63%
Trophy (≥ 18 ")	12%	15%



OTHER SPECIES

There were 15 brook trout captured, and length ranged from 7.2 to 15.0 inches. One tiger trout (hybrid) was captured, and it was 8.6 inches. Two northern pike were captured, and they were 22.5 and 28 inches. Other species observed included white suckers, creek chubs, slimy sculpin and brook stickleback but were not recorded.

Summary

Overall, the fisheries in the White River are healthy and improving. Surveys in 2015 found low brown trout population estimates following a series of extreme floods and harsh winters. Since then, the brown trout population has rebounded in numbers and size, and it remains one of the best trophy brown trout fisheries in the state. A few brook trout were captured but most brook trout were likely in other parts of the watershed at the time of this survey. Although infrequent, northern pike were still documented. Tributaries to the White River will be sampled in summer 2025, an angler creel survey will be completed by the end of 2025, and a comprehensive report of those surveys will follow.

Trout fishing regulations for the White River in Bayfield County, Wisconsin. Only artificial lures can be used during the early catch and release season.

LOCATION	SEASON DATES	DAILY BAG LIMIT	SIZE LIMIT
Downstream from Pike River Road Bridge to the White River Dam	1 st Saturday in May at 5:00 AM to October 15 th	1 trout	18 inches
Upstream of the Pike River Road Bridge	1 st Saturday in May at 5:00 AM to October 15 th	3 trout	8 inches
All sections upstream of the White River Dam	1 st Saturday in January to Friday preceding 1 st Saturday in May	Catch-and-release only	Catch-and-release only

References

Ricker, W. E. 1975. Computation and interpretation of biological statistics of fish populations. Fisheries Research Board of Canada Bulletin 191.

For answers to questions about fisheries management activities on the White River in Bayfield County, contact:

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