



# WISCONSIN DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

## 2025 Wadable Trout Streams Survey Report Bayfield and Douglas Counties

1701 N 4th Street, Superior, WI 54880

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### Trout Survey Objectives

The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources Lake Superior fisheries team conducts annual surveys to monitor local trout stream populations. Surveys aim to estimate stream trout relative abundance, size structure and condition. A total of three streams are surveyed every year, followed by ten streams every three years to monitor trends, while 81 other trout streams are surveyed on a 6- year rotation-based watershed schedule. Survey results support fisheries management decisions and provide historical records. Evaluating fishery management regulations, assessing native fish restoration efforts and prioritizing cold-water fish habitat projects are a few of the important processes survey results can be utilized for. Surveys also indicate productive fishing destinations for many angler preferences. Please refer to the Wisconsin Trout Fishing Guide for additional regulations or contact your local fisheries biologists for stream specific questions.

### Survey Methods

All site data is collected using either a backpack or stream barge electrofishing unit. Sampling distance is at least 35 times the mean stream width or a minimum of 100 meters, whichever is greater. All fish species are collected, counted, measured and weighed.

### Metric Descriptions

**Catch per unit effort (CPUE)** is an indirect method of measuring fish population relative abundance. For all trout surveys we quantify the number of brook, brown or rainbow trout captured over a certain size length (inches) per one mile of stream. CPUE indices are compared to other WI trout streams to categorize trout abundance.

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### Annual Trend Surveys

**Table 1. Summary statistics for annual trend streams. Age-assignments are based on length-frequency distributions. State percentiles use CPUE indices of Age-2 or greater than six-inch brook and brown trout to compare across trout streams statewide. For example, if a stream falls under the 75th percentile, only 25 percent of other streams statewide have a CPUE greater than that stream, which is considered above average.**

Stream Name	County	Total Number Sampled	Brook Trout CPUE (No. fish/mile)				Brown Trout CPUE (No. fish/mile)				Rainbow Trout CPUE (No. fish/mile)		
			State Percentile	YOY	Age-1	Age-2+	State Percentile	YOY	Age-1	Age-2+	YOY	Age-1	Age-2+
East Fork Flag River	Bayfield	405	50-65%	31	12	89	50-65%	260	279	264	512	39	85
Whittlesey Creek	Bayfield	14	-	0	0	0	10-25%	6	11	23	11	0	29
Onion River	Bayfield	17	10-25%	0	0	24	10-25%	8	16	39	47	0	0

### Three-Year Trend Surveys

**Table 2. Summary statistics for trend streams sampled every three years. Age-assignments are based on length-frequency distributions. State percentiles use CPUE indices of Age-2 or greater than six-inch brook and brown trout to compare across trout streams statewide. For example, if a stream falls under the 75th percentile, only 25 percent of other streams statewide have a CPUE greater than that stream, which is considered above average.**

Stream Name	County	Total Number Sampled	Brook Trout CPUE (No. fish/mile)				Brown Trout CPUE (No. fish/mile)				Rainbow Trout CPUE (No. fish/mile)		
			State Percentile	YOY	Age-1	Age-2+	State Percentile	YOY	Age-1	Age-2+	YOY	Age-1	Age-2+
Bark River	Bayfield	147	50%	102	80	80	10-25%	1170	91	57	34	23	34
Little Bois Brule River	Douglas	185	35-50%	9	9	69	50-65%	259	0	328	319	35	103
Little Balsam Creek	Douglas	242	35-50%	1025	127	51	-	0	0	0	1709	0	51

### Six-Year Rotational Watershed Surveys

**Table 3. Summary statistics for streams sampled on a six-year rotation. Age-assignments are based on length-frequency distributions. State percentiles use CPUE indices of Age-2 or greater than six-inch brook and brown trout to compare across trout streams statewide. For example, if a stream falls under the 75th percentile, only 25 percent of other streams statewide have a CPUE greater than that stream, which is considered above average.**

Stream Name	County	Total Number Sampled	Brook Trout CPUE (No. fish/mile)				Brown Trout CPUE (No. fish/mile)				Rainbow Trout CPUE (No. fish/mile)		
			State Percentile	YOY	Age-1	Age-2+	State Percentile	YOY	Age-1	Age-2+	YOY	Age-1	Age-2+
Casey Creek	Douglas	160	-	0	0	0	-	1074	168	0	421	21	0
Miller Creek	Douglas	5	35%	12	0	48	-	0	0	0	0	0	0
Pikes Creek	Bayfield	566	10%	225	18	9	-	0	0	0	2054	9	135
Poplar River	Douglas	16	-	0	0	0	<10%	0	0	11	0	27	67
Raspberry River	Bayfield	No Trout	-	0	0	0	-	0	0	0	0	0	0
Red River	Douglas	No Trout	-	0	0	0	-	0	0	0	0	0	0
Rock Creek	Douglas	35	75%	61	288	182	-	0	0	0	0	0	0
Thompson Creek	Bayfield	292	75-90%	601	394	207	-	0	0	0	311	0	0