

## The Youghiogheny River Catch and Return Trout Fishing Area 2017 Trout Population Survey Results



*A trophy brown trout caught in the Youghiogheny River Catch and Return Trout Fishing Area, 2017.*

### **Introduction**

The portion of the Youghiogheny River in Garrett County from the Deep Creek Hydroelectric Station tailrace downstream approximately four miles to the Sang Run Bridge was designated a Catch and Return Trout Fishing Area (C&R TFA) in 1993. Regulations limit terminal tackle to artificial lures and flies. Fishing is permitted year-round. The fishery in the C&R TFA is maintained through put-and-grow stockings of fingerling brown trout and rainbow trout. Surplus adult rainbow trout are stocked in the late spring as well in October as part of the fall recreational trout fishing program. The department strives to maintain a trout population density of 1,000 trout per mile and a biomass of 22 lbs/acre as measured during early September sampling efforts. Two 600 foot stations are sampled within the C&R TFA, the Hoyes Run Station located near the upper boundary and the Sang Run Station located near the lower boundary. Students from the Garrett College Natural Resource and Wildlife Technology Program provide assistance with the electrofishing surveys and gain valuable experience.



*Garrett College Natural Resource and Wildlife Technology Program students with a trophy brown trout collected during the 2017 survey.*

## Results

### *Trout population estimates*

The average trout density was less than the management objective of 1000 trout/mile; however, densities at the Hoyes Run station did meet the objective level at 1,074 trout/mile while the Sang Run station contained an estimated 229 trout/mile. The average biomass fell with the management objective of 22 lbs/acre. Condition factors or trout “plumpness” were within the optimal range for both trout species. Trout species composition was 43% brown trout and 57% rainbow trout. The size distribution of brown trout and rainbow trout show quality-size (> 12 inches) and trophy sized trout (> 15 inches) were present in the population. The largest brown trout collected was 24 inches and the largest rainbow trout was 19.3 inches. The estimated number of quality-size trout (> 12 inches) was 119 trout per mile. The quality-size trout estimate is a useful descriptor of the population’s age and size structure and demonstrates the trophy potential of the fishery. Generally, fingerling-stocked trout attain 12 inches by age three in the Youghiogheny River C&R TFA. The department has documented a significant increase in the number of quality-size trout since catch and return fishing regulations and coldwater enhancement measures from the Deep Creek Lake Hydro-electric Station were implemented.



*Fisheries Biologist Jason Cessna with a trophy rainbow trout collected during the 2017 survey.*

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