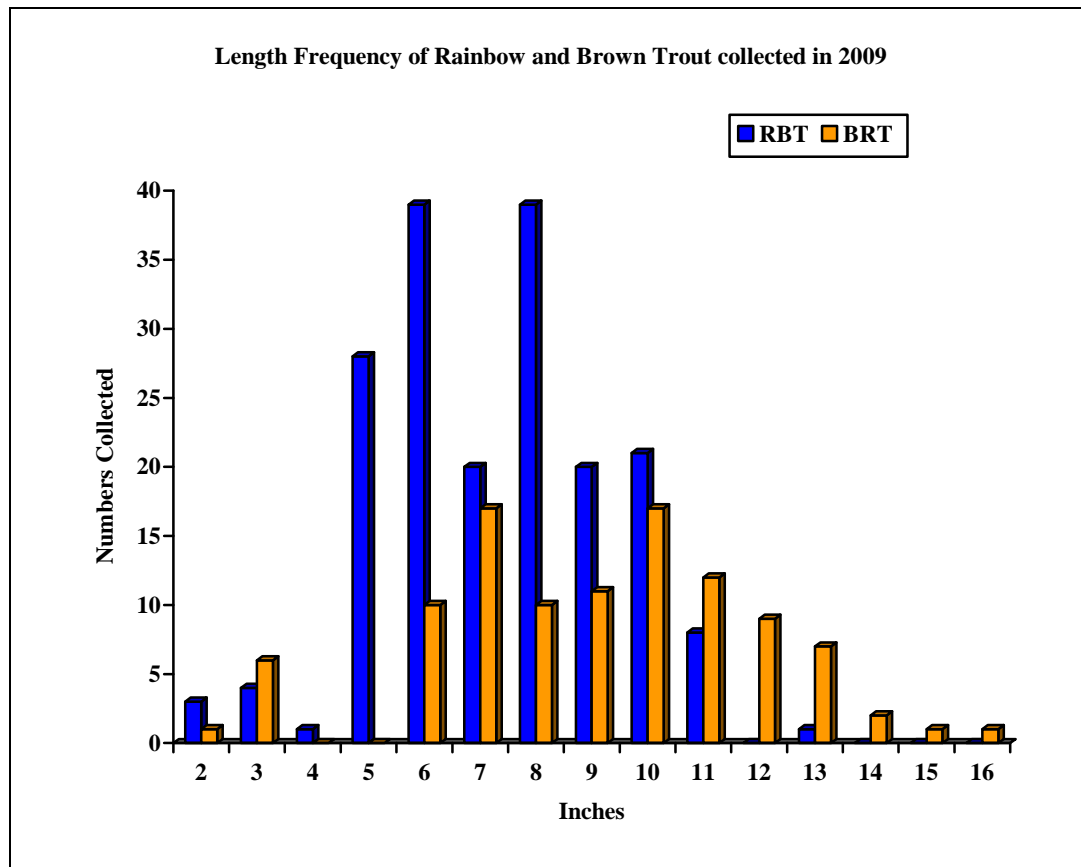


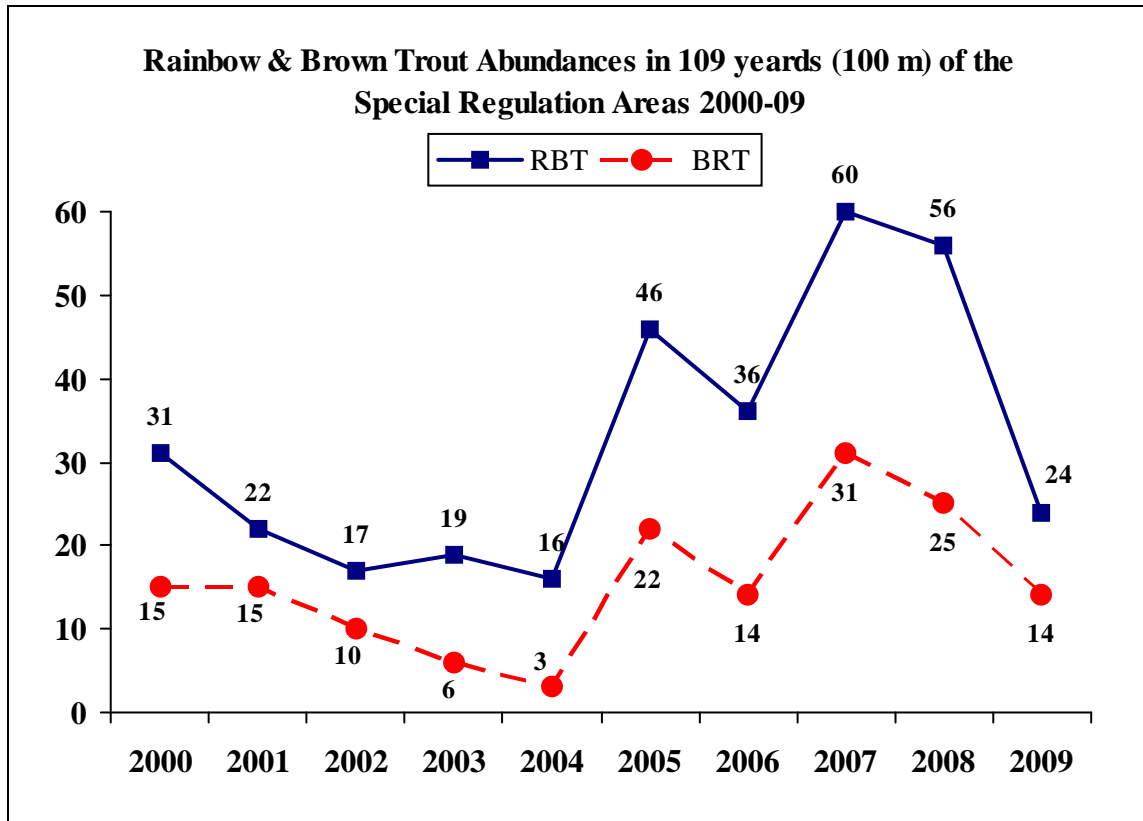


Whitetop Laurel Creek Special Regulation Trout Section 2010

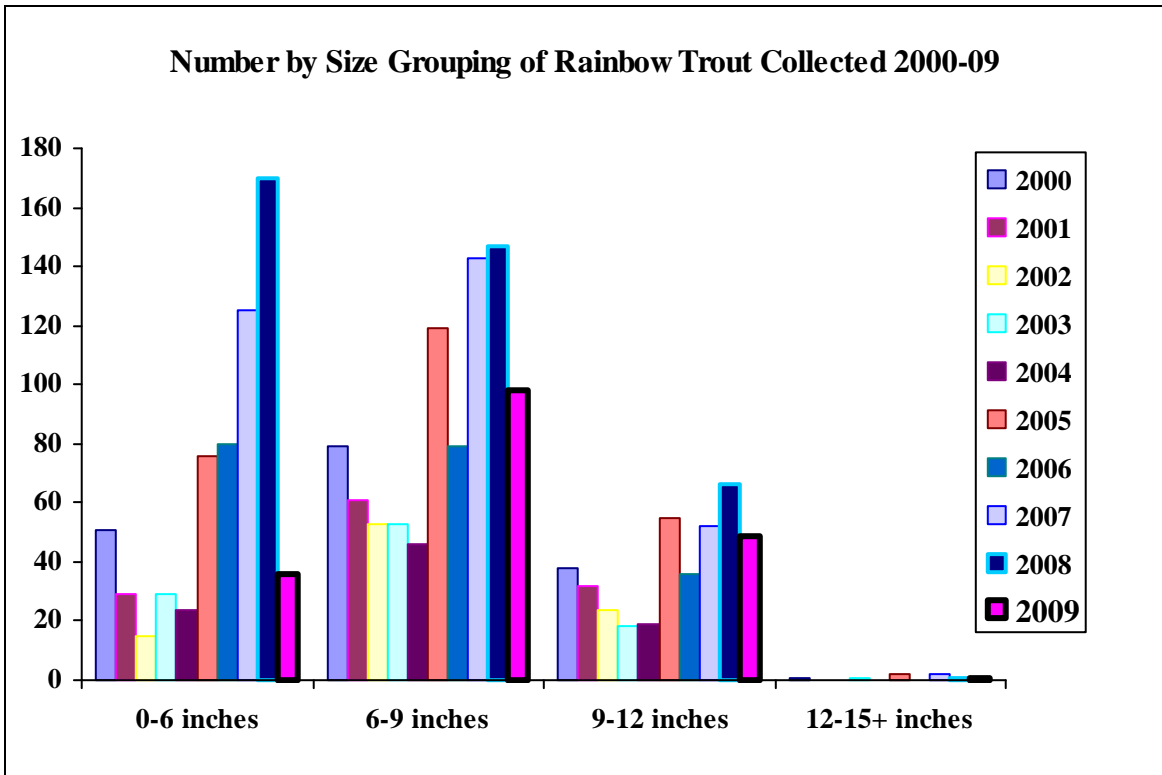
Whitetop Laurel Creek in Washington County is managed to provide trout fishing opportunities for different angler groups. The special regulation sections of the stream are managed using restrictive size and creel limits of 12 inch minimum size with a 6 fish daily creel. To assess the effectiveness of these regulations, fisheries biologists with the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries monitor the trout population annually. In 2009, six sampling sites, ranging from 100 to 163 yards (91-149 m) each, were chosen for routine fish data collection. The sites are located in the special regulation section of Whitetop Laurel Creek and are sampled annually as part of ongoing fish monitoring and management. Collections were made using three backpack electrofishing units. A total distance of approximately 841 yards (769 m) was sampled from the combined sampling sites (6) within the special regulation sections of Whitetop Laurel Creek yielding a catch of 184 rainbow trout and 104 brown trout. The following graph shows the sizes and numbers of rainbow and brown trout collected in 2009 samples from the special regulation areas.



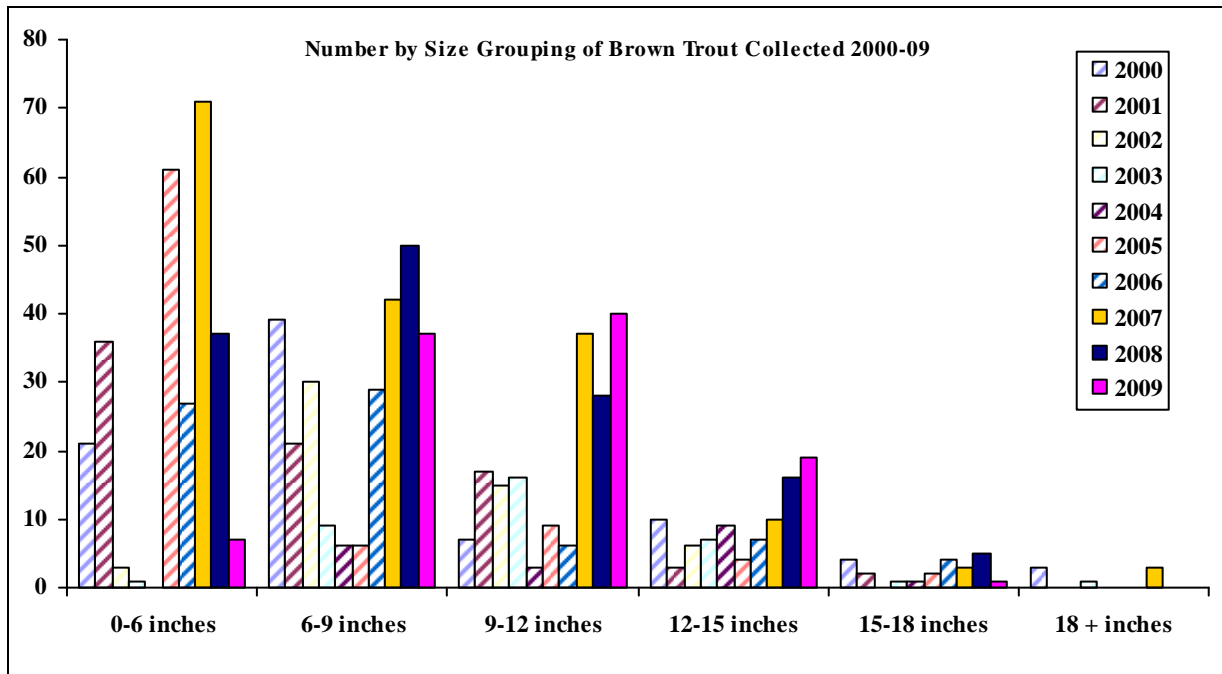
Data collected from 2009 samples indicate that there are approximately 24 rainbow trout and 14 brown trout collected in 109 yards (100 m). The following graphs show summary data of rainbow and brown trout collected from the special regulation areas over the last decade. Total catch of rainbow and brown trout was down significantly from samples collected since 2004. This could be a result of increased stream flows during the 2009 samples that caused decreased catch of young trout (less than 6 inches).



Size categories of rainbow trout are grouped as young (< 6 inches), stock (6-9 inches), quality (9-12 inches), and preferred (12-15+ inches). The following graph displays the annual catch by the number collected from the various size groups. The rainbow trout population is dominated by fish less than 9 inches which have constituted a majority of the population since 2000.



Brown trout size categories are grouped as young (less than 6 inches), stock (6-9 inches), quality (9-12 inches), preferred (12-15 inches), memorable (15-18 inches), and trophy (18 inches and larger). Comparisons of size groups annually since 2000 show a brown trout population with an abundance of fish from many year classes as the graph displays. Young brown trout were limited in the 2009 samples and could be a result of increased flows during the sampling period.



Management Recommendations

Future management of the Whitetop Laurel Special Regulation Area should focus on population monitoring of trout populations. The annual supplemental stocking of brown trout was terminated due to natural reproduction. An angler survey is scheduled to be done in 2014 to evaluate angling pressure and catch.