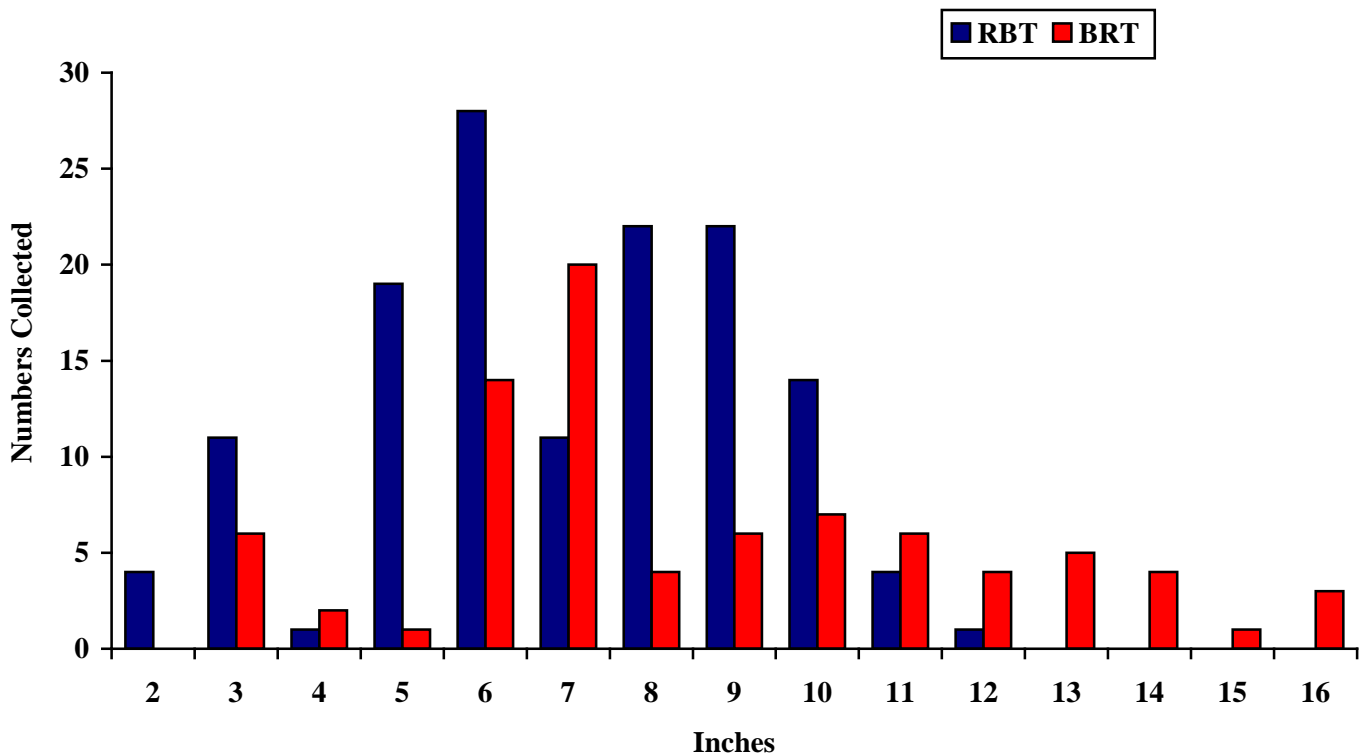




Whitetop Laurel Creek Special Regulation Trout Section 2012 Report

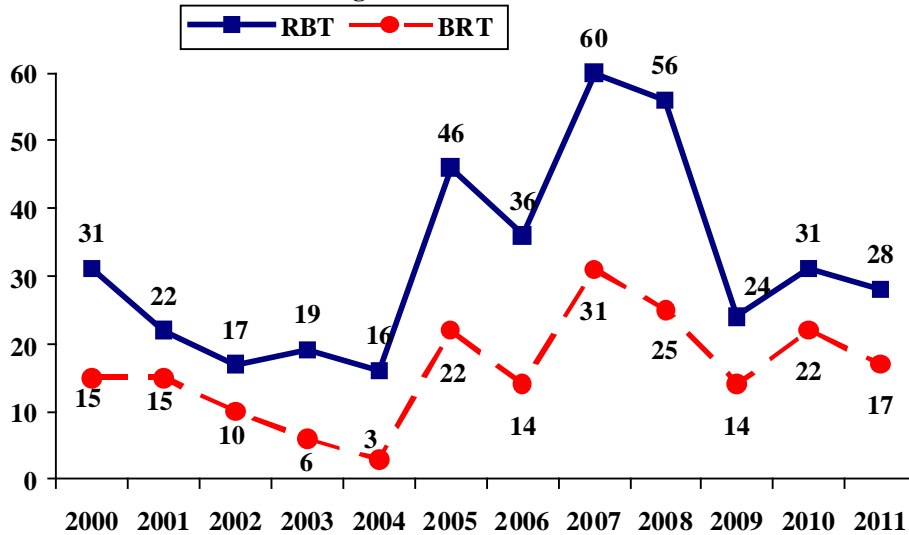
Whitetop Laurel Creek in Washington County is managed to provide trout fishing opportunities for different angler groups. The special regulation sections of the stream are managed using restrictive size and creel limits of 12 inch minimum size with a 6 fish daily creel. To assess the effectiveness of these regulations, fisheries biologists with the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries monitor the trout population annually. In 2011, three sampling sites, ranging from 161 to 190 yards (147-174 m) each, were chosen for routine fish data collection. The sites were 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 538 yards (492 m) was sampled from the combined sampling sites (3) within the special regulation sections of Whitetop Laurel Creek yielding a catch of 137 rainbow trout and 83 brown trout. The following graph shows the sizes and numbers of rainbow and brown trout collected in 2011 samples from the special regulation areas.

Length Frequency of Rainbow and Brown Trout collected in 2011



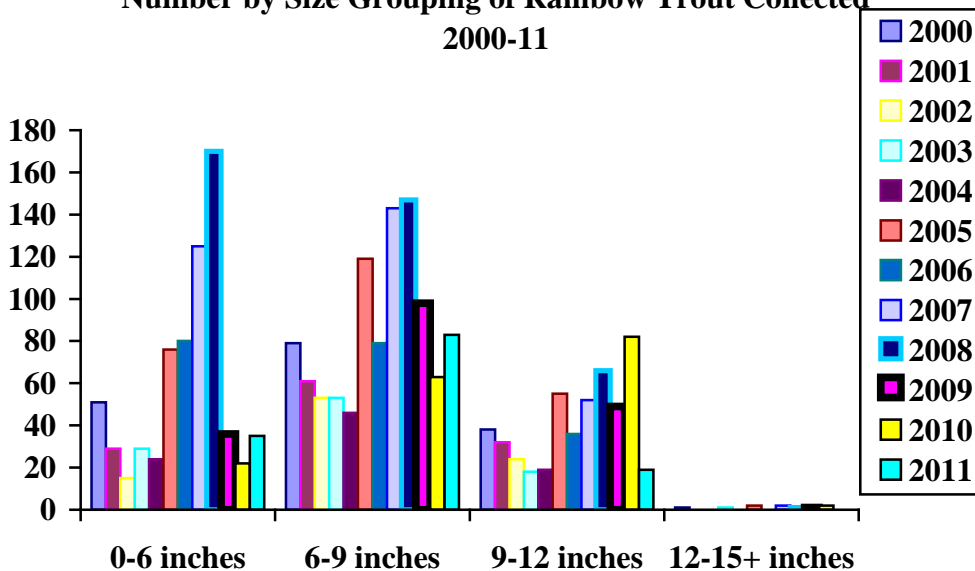
Data collected from 2011 samples indicate that there were approximately 28 rainbow trout and 17 brown trout collected in 100 meters. The following graphs show summary data of rainbow and brown trout collected from the special regulation areas from 2000-11. Total catch of rainbow trout was down significantly from samples collected in 2007 but appear to be increasing slightly.

Rainbow & Brown Trout Abundances in 100 meters of the Special Regulation Areas 2000-11

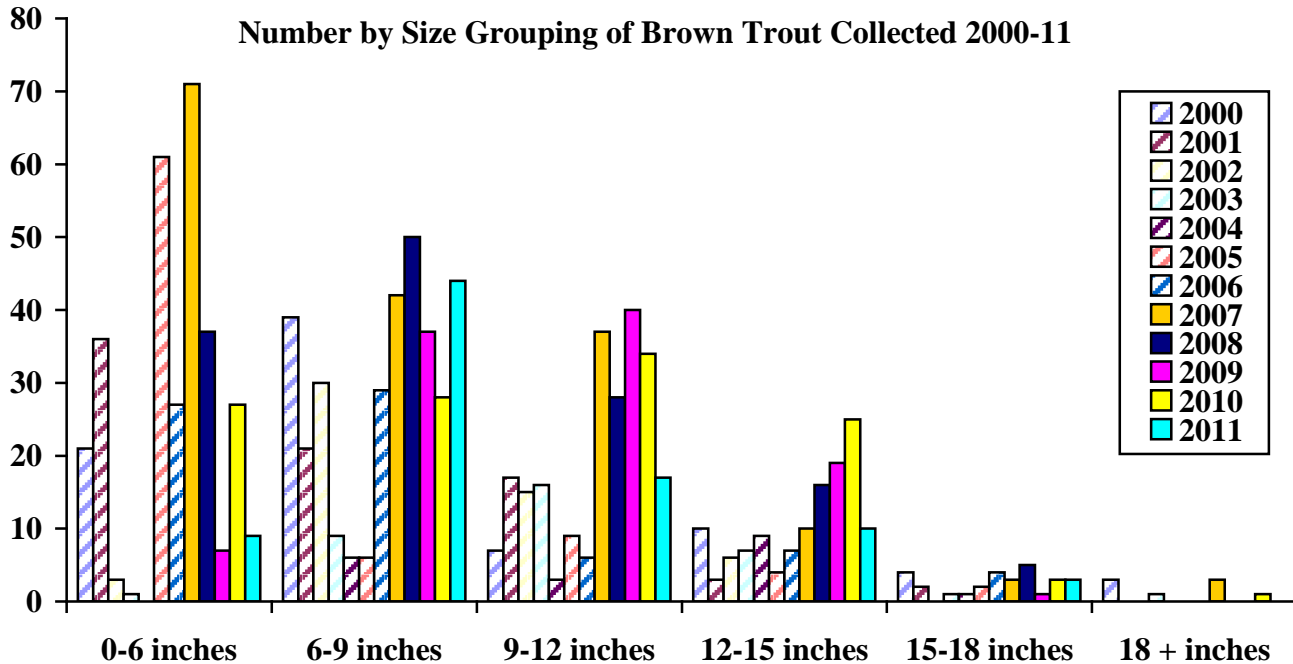


Size categories of rainbow trout are grouped as young (< 6 inches), stock (6-9 inches), quality (9-12 inches), and preferred (12-15+ inches.). The following graph displays the annual catch by the number collected from the various size groups. The rainbow trout population is dominated by fish less than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

Number by Size Grouping of Rainbow Trout Collected 2000-11



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 size classes as the graph displays. This indicates good reproduction and recruitment in the brown trout population. Brown trout in the 6-9 inch group were the most abundant size class in 2011 samples.



Management Recommendations

Future management of the Whitetop Laurel Special Regulation Area should focus on 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 2013 to evaluate angling pressure and catch.