

LANDLOCKED ATLANTIC SALMON SPAWN IN STREAMS DURING THE FALL

Landlocked Atlantic salmon (*Salmo salar*) are not believed to be native to Lake George, but have been stocked for many years because they are highly sought after by anglers. These fish are known for the spectacular fight they offer anglers and can jump out of the water numerous times. Atlantic salmon are moderately compressed, elongate fish with a deeply forked tail. The top of the fish can vary in color from olive brown to green or blue. The sides of the fish are silvery in color with numerous small, black spots.

Atlantic salmon living in saltwater are anadromous, which means they enter freshwater streams to spawn. However, there are many landlocked populations that are confined to freshwater environments, which spawn in a stream during the fall. During spawning the female turns on her side and fans out a nest in the stream bed where the eggs are deposited. After spawning the fish

SALMON



Atlantic salmon from the Warren County Fish Hatchery are stocked in Lake George in the fall.

return to the lake, unlike pacific salmon that die immediately after spawning. The eggs hatch shortly after and the young landlocked salmon usually stay in the streams for a couple of years before migrating back to the lake.

The first introductions of salmon into Lake George likely took place in the late 1800s, but these along with subsequent efforts have not been successful at establishing a naturally reproducing population.

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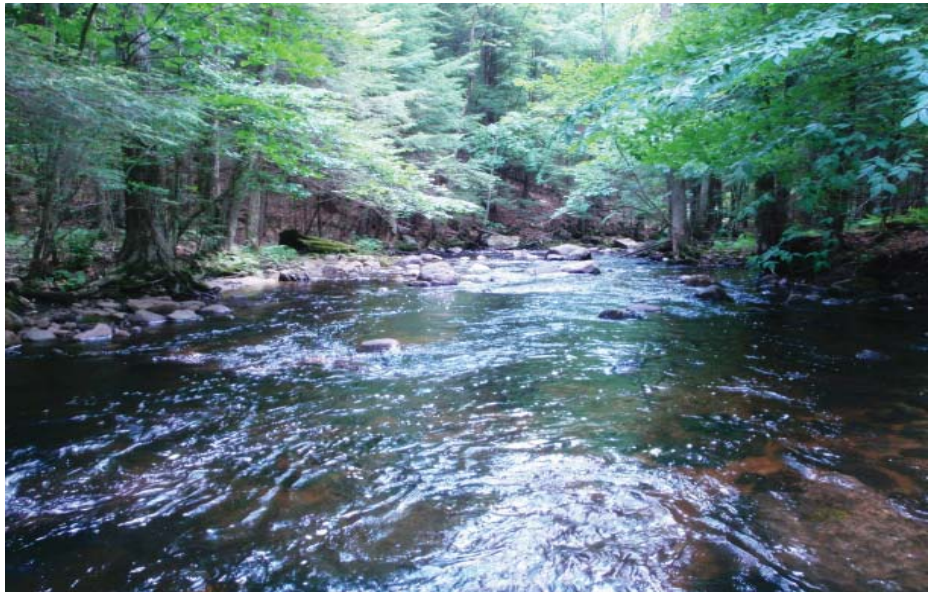
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Salmon

LAKE GEORGE FACT SHEET

The inability of landlocked salmon to reproduce in Lake George is likely in part due to the steep terrain of the watershed, which limits the amount of suitable spawning habitat for the fish that require long runs of streams with pebble bottoms. Additionally, many of the streams can experience low flow conditions in the summer, which is not conducive to rearing young fish.

Through persistent stocking efforts landlocked salmon were once relatively abundant in Lake George, but numbers have recently dwindled. According to the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation Angler Diary Program the survival rate of salmon appears to have declined. According to the voluntary study, catch and creel rates for salmon have been below target levels for several years and complaints about the fishery have increased. The reduced number of landlocked salmon in Lake George may be due to the genetic strain of the fish being stocked. Some offer that using a genetic strain from Sebago Lake in Maine, which were introduced in Lake Champlain, would improve the survivorship of the fish in Lake George. Another reason why the number of salmon



Suitable stream habitat is one of the important components required for salmon spawning. Lake George streams offer only marginal salmon spawning habitat.

may be relatively low in Lake George may be due to predation by lake trout. Therefore, fish have been being released at a larger size to increase the ability of the fish to avoid predation by other fish. Although not a simple task, efforts continue to rejuvenate the salmon population in Lake George.

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