

MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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**2024 Annual Report on
Updates to the State Heritage Fish Waters List
Presented to the 132nd Legislature Joint Standing
Committee on Inland Fisheries and Wildlife**



Prepared by Kory Whittum, Fisheries Planner and Research Coordinator,
Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife

January 17th, 2025

History

Title 12 MRSA, Section 12461 requires the Department's commissioner to adopt by rule a list of state heritage fish waters (SHFW) composed of lakes and ponds that contain state heritage fish (Brook Trout waters and Arctic Charr waters) that have never been stocked or have not been stocked for at least 25 years. The list of state heritage fish waters may be amended by rule (routine technical) based on criteria established by the commissioner.

The following restrictions apply to waters designated as State Heritage Fish Waters to promote conservation of these resources:

1. Stocking. The Commissioner may not stock or issue a permit to stock fish in a lake or pond listed as a state heritage fish water.
2. Restrictions. A person may not use live fish as bait (NLFAB) or possess live fish to be used as bait on a lake or pond listed as a state heritage fish water.

It is noteworthy to mention that in 2020 the Department advanced new General Law precluding use of NLFAB in North Zone to reduce introductions of baitfish and other fish in the bait bucket that may compete with native trout and charr, providing much broader level of protection to native trout populations beyond listed SHFW.

Furthermore, the Department developed a special nomination review form and a SHFW database to identify and track waters eligible for consideration.

Executive Summary

In 2023, one water was added to the SHFW list, and one water was removed (Table 1), for a total of 585 waters on the State Heritage Fish Waters List. In total, 15 waters were reviewed based on their stocking history and available fisheries sampling data. For 2024, four waters were added to the SHFW list (Table 2), for a total of 589 waters on the State Heritage Fish Waters List. In total, eight waters were reviewed based on their stocking history and available sampling data.

Overview

2023 Review Process Summary: Big Indian Pond (Moosehead Junction Twp) was recommended for advancement due to the presence of a self-sustaining wild Brook Trout population. Beck Pond (T3 R5) was recommended for removal from the SHFW list due to recent fisheries sampling demonstrating the lack of a self-sustaining wild Brook Trout population and marginal water quality. Hammond Pond (Carrabasset Valley), Log Landing Pond (Caratunk), Benjamin Pond (Attean Twp), Long Pond (Attean Twp), Mud Pond (Tim Pond Twp), Mud Pond (Solon), Tim Pond (Tim Pond Twp), Unnamed Pond (Grafton Twp), and Duncan Pond (Prentiss Twp) did not meet heritage listing criteria based on available fisheries sampling data demonstrating the lack of a self-sustaining wild Brook Trout population. Upper Hudson Pond (T11 R10 WELS), Cliff Lake (T9 R12 WELS), and John's Pond (T4 R4) were pushed back for review until updated fisheries sampling has been conducted. Big Fish Pond (Holeb Twp) was identified as

a Maine Indian Tribal State Commission (MITSC) water so this water was also pushed back for future consultation with MITSC.

2024 Review Process Summary: Aziscohos Lake (Lincoln Plt), Lower South Branch Pond (T5 R9 WELS), Upper Hudson Pond (T11 R10 WELS), and Thomas Lake (T16 R8 WELS) were recommended for addition to the SHFW list based on their stocking history and fisheries sampling data demonstrating that these waters supported self-sustaining wild Brook Trout populations. Moore Pond (Bradstreet Twp) and Upper Sabao Lake (T41 MD BPP) were not recommended for addition to the SHFW list based on fisheries sampling data demonstrating the lack of a self-sustaining wild Brook Trout population. Johns Pond (T4 R4) has yet to be visited by regional staff to obtain updated fisheries sampling data so this water will be reviewed once updated data is available for the review process. Big Fish Pond (Holeb Twp) was not considered for SHFW listing in the 2024 review as additional consultation with MITSC is still required.

Table 1. 2023 amendments to the SHFW list maintained by the SECRETARY OF STATE: Strike-through records are waters that were removed from the SHFW list.

WATCODE	STATE HERITAGE FISH WATER	TOWN	COUNTY	REGION	STATE HERITAGE FISH	*LAST YEAR STOCKED
0324	Big Indian Pond	Moosehead Junction Twp	Piscataquis	E	BKT	1997
5142	Beck Pond	T03-R05	SOMERSET	D	BKT	1968

Table 2. 2024 amendments to the SHFW list maintained by the SECRETARY OF STATE.

WATCODE	STATE HERITAGE FISH WATER	TOWN	COUNTY	REGION	STATE HERITAGE FISH	*LAST YEAR STOCKED
3290	Aziscohos Lake	Lincoln Plt	Oxford	D	BKT	1999
4222	Lower South Branch Pond	T5 R9 WELS	Piscataquis	F	BKT	1998
1928	Upper Hudson Pond	T11 R10 WELS	Aroostook	G	BKT	1997
9285	Thomas Lake	T16 R8 WELS	Aroostook	G	BKT	NA