

LAKE COWLES
T3R9, Piscataquis Co.
U.S.G.S. Katahdin, Me.

Fishes

None

Physical Characteristics

Area - 10 acres

Temperatures

Maximum depth - 52 feet

Surface - 68° F.

50 feet - 50° F.

Principal Fishery: None

Lake Cowles is located on a plateau near the head of Mt. Katahdin's remote Northwest Basin. Together with Davis Pond, a short distance to the east, it lies at the headwaters of one of the two main branches of Wassataquoik Stream.

The area around Lake Cowles is a unique geological area because of the glacial sheepbacks that are found there. These smooth ridges of bedrock are products of glacial erosion. Their shape and orientation reflect the pattern of movement of the valley glacier that carved out the Northwest Basin thousands of years ago.

Lake Cowles is quite different from the other small ponds on Mount Katahdin. Its waters are not nearly as transparent as those of the other ponds, and it is much deeper than all of those ponds. Aquatic vegetation is found in many of the shallow areas around Lake Cowles, a characteristic also not common to the other ponds up on the Mountain.

The bottom is covered with a thick layer of mud, and littered with large boulders that must have come down from the slopes of the Northwest Plateau rising steeply to the south of the pond. Many boulders and rocks line the shore. The area around the outlet is quite shallow and rocky.

Spruce forest covers the shore to the south that rises up to the Northwest Plateau. Extremely dense stands of stunted spruce cover the sheepbacks on the east and west shores of the pond. Access to the water's edge is difficult through this dense growth, except at the outlet, which is crossed by the Northwest Basin Trail. Lake Cowles is about the halfway point on this trail between Russell and Chimney Ponds. A short distance to the north of Lake Cowles the land drops off sharply to the floor of the Northwest Basin. Here the outlet of Lake Cowles falls for a long distance over bedrock, making fish passage from below impossible.

No fish were observed in Lake Cowles at the time of survey. Given the steep nature of the outlet, this was not unexpected. However, of all the small ponds on the Mountain, it is probably the most likely candidate to support a trout population. The water quality is excellent at all depths for trout, and it appears to be a relatively productive body of water.

There are no major tributaries to Lake Cowles, only a couple of small spring trickles that would be of little consequence to trout reproduction. Any trout population introduced would probably have to be maintained by stocking.

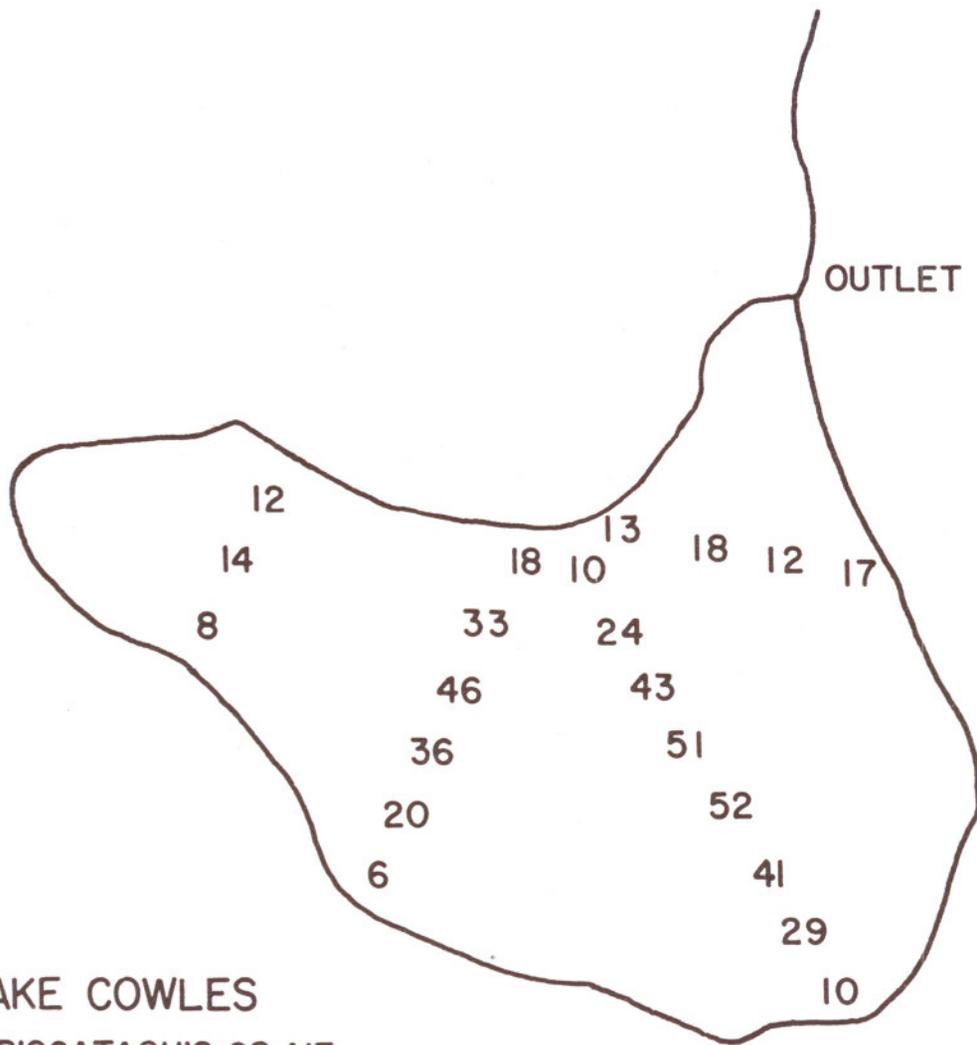
Presently, there are no plans to stock Lake Cowles. The amount of fishing pressure that it would receive would not at this time make a stocking program justifiable.

But even more important, before stocking of any of Katahdin's barren ponds is initiated, a complete study should be made of the flora and fauna in them. Most have been fishless since the glacier receded. It is possible that they may contain rare or unique species of life that could be jeopardized by a trout introduction. There are many remote waters in Baxter State Park that provide good fishing for trout. These can withstand more fishing pressure before we need to consider trout introductions for the barren waters.

Surveyed - July, 1973

Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Game

Published under Appropriation No. 4223



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T3R9, PISCATAQUIS CO., ME.
AREA 10 ACRES

A horizontal scale bar with a vertical tick mark at the left end labeled '0' and a vertical tick mark at the right end labeled '1'. Below the bar is the text 'ONE TENTH MILE'.

ONE TENTH MILE