

MURPHY PONDS
T2R11, Piscataquis Co.
U.S.G.S. Harrington Lake, Me.

Fishes

Brook trout (squaretail)	Minnnows
	Golden shiner

Physical Characteristics

LITTLE MURPHY

Area - 4 acres	Temperatures
Maximum depth - 3 feet	Surface - 72° F.

BIG MURPHY

Area - 15 acres	Temperatures
Maximum depth - 27 feet	Surface - 72° F. 26 feet - 42° F.

Principal Fishery: Brook trout

The Murphy Ponds lie along the Appalachian Trail, halfway between Rainbow and Nahmakanta Lakes. Little Murphy Pond is visible from the Trail, which skirts its eastern shore. Most of the pond is shallow and weedy. Very little of its area is open water. In the normal course of pond succession, Little Murphy is nearing the end of the filling-in stage.

It is possible that a few trout move into the pond from the outlet during the spring and fall; however, during most summers, warm water temperatures make the pond unsuitable for brook trout. There may be some small springs around the pond providing limited areas of cool water for a few trout during the warmest periods, but these would be of little significance in considering Little Murphy Pond for trout management. No stocking is recommended.

Big Murphy Pond is located a short distance to the east of Little Murphy. It can be found by following the outlet from Little Murphy, circumventing a large wooded knoll. Big Murphy is surrounded by dense spruce and fir forest. Shrubs and grassy areas are found along the immediate shore. A boggy area as large as the pond surrounds the inlet. It contains many large dead cedars. The bottom of the pond consists of thick mud, and the water in the pond is light brown in color.

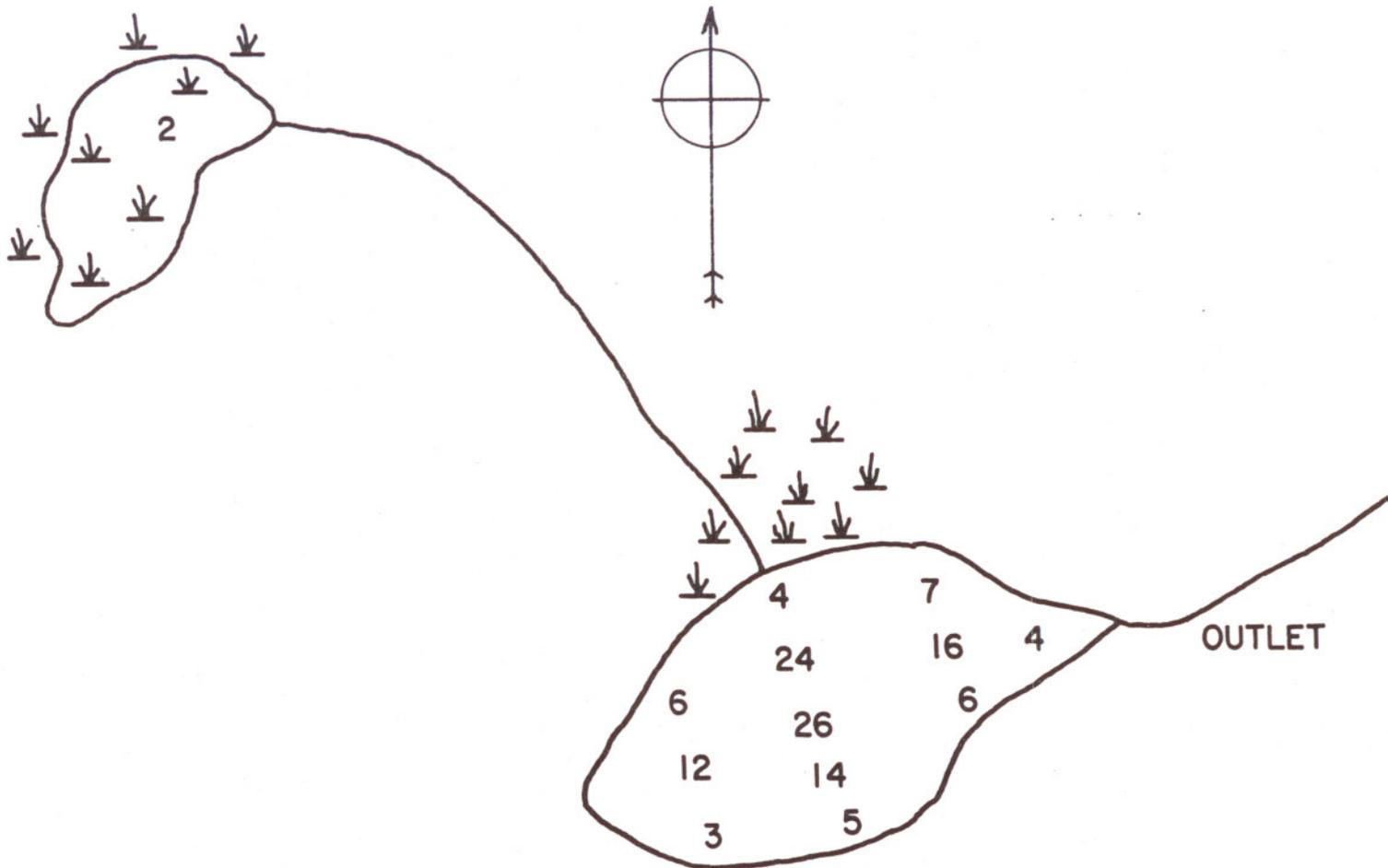
In spite of an oxygen deficiency in the deepest water, there is enough cool water of suitable quality to support a population of brook trout. Big Murphy has in the past been noted for producing large trout. A population of golden shiners in the pond compete for food with young trout, but these shiners are also a source of food for trout attaining fish-eating size. This factor could explain the large size of the trout for which the pond is noted.

Natural reproduction has always been sufficient to maintain the trout population in Big Murphy. The inlet provides some spawning and nursery area for trout able to find their way through the bog. There are suitable areas in the outlet as well, and it is possible that trout could move upstream into the pond from Rainbow Stream. However, at the time of survey, no young trout were observed in the inlet, and a series of beaver dams blocked the outlet. Spawning in the outlet and migration from Rainbow Stream has not contributed to Big Murphy's trout population for a number of years.

The pond probably cannot support a very large trout population. Very little recent success in natural reproduction combined with the fishing pressure the pond has received has reduced the trout population to its present level. Small trout ponds such as Big Murphy are very susceptible to fishing pressure. It does not take many fishermen to reduce the trout population to the point that fishing quality is considered poor. For this reason, we discourage the practices of making small, remote trout ponds more accessible and of leaving boats or canoes on their shores to promote and increase exploitation of their fisheries.

As there are many other trout waters in the area, and because of its size and remote location, we feel that Big Murphy should not be stocked at this time. With the new Rainbow Stream lean-to quite close by, it is possible that the demand for a fishery in Big Murphy Pond may increase. At that time, stocking to supplement the existing population could be considered.

The present regulation prohibiting the use or possession of live fish as bait is desirable to prevent the introduction of any new species. Should a stocking program be initiated, we would recommend at that time a five fish limit to distribute the catch more evenly among anglers.



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AREA 15.4 ACRES

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ONE TENTH MILE