

Written by: Tim Cwalinski, MDNR Fisheries

Stewart Creek is a small stream which begins in northwestern Montmorency County and flows easterly into the Black River. It flows for approximately two miles through the Pigeon River Country State Forest and private land (Black River Ranch). Very little information exists for this small creek. Type 1 fishing regulations apply for this waterbody where trout minimum size is 8 inches in length and gear types are liberal.

In 2004, temperature data was gathered for Stewart Creek throughout the summer. Results can be found in Table 1. The stream often went through periods of time when temperatures were not suitable to brook trout survival. The stream flows primarily through a thick coniferous lowland dominated by cedar and spruce trees. Stewart Creek begins in Robarge (Sally) Lake and flows through a series of beaver dams. Thus, it begins naturally as a warm stream and gains considerable groundwater as it flows through the thick coniferous forest.

Table 1. Summer temperatures for Stewart Creek at Blue Lakes Road, 2004.

Month	Minimum (F)	Average (F)	Maximum (F)
June	55	63	74
July	60	67	76
August	55	64	73

Fisheries Division MDNR conducted a brief fish community survey on April 24, 2007 of Stewart Creek. A backpack electrofishing unit with one probe was used to assess the fish community in a reach of approximately 500 feet. This was directly upstream of Blue Lakes Road. Average width of the clear stream was about 11 feet. Sand was the dominant substrate with no gravel present. Undercut banks were somewhat common along with large and small woody debris. Maximum depth was about 2 1/2 feet. Electrofishing efficiency was considered fair-satisfactory.

Species collected included brook trout, creek chub, bluntnose minnow, central mudminnow, white sucker, northern redbelly dace, and blacknose dace. A length- and age-frequency for the brook trout is provided in Table 2.

Table 1. Length- and age-frequencies of brook trout collected in Stewart Creek in 500 feet of stream directly upstream of Blue Lakes Road.

Length (in)	Number Collected	Age (s)
3	5	I
4	6	I
5	1	I

Recommendations:

Type 1 fishing regulations for this stream are appropriate. Resource agencies should investigate the proper replacement of the culvert at Blue Lakes Road. It is undersized and creates a heavy downstream scour pool. The approaches to the stream are steep and of erodable materials.