
Subject: : Fly Fishing Locations

Topic: : Mainstem Delaware

Re: Mainstem Delaware

Author: : afishinado

Date: : 2013/1/18 8:14:42

URL:

Quote:

Fishidiot wrote:

Call me skeptical on the notion of sea run browns in the Delaware. Sure, there are browns, and big ones, in the river.

To be "sea run" however, they need to migrate down into tidal, brackish water. It's certainly possible during the colder months, but I think it's highly unlikely.

If anyone has any scientific evidence of this...I'd be curious to see it.

From the NJDEP site: <http://www.state.nj.us/dep/fgw/crunbrn.htm>

Occasional catch reports of sea run brown trout from the Manasquan River prompted the NJDEP Division of Fish and Wildlife's Bureau of Freshwater Fisheries to initiate a stocking program to create a sea run brown trout fishery. Since 1997, in addition to the regular spring and fall stockings, over 300,000 eight-inch brown trout have been stocked in the brackish and lower freshwater sections of the river for that purpose.

During the first years the trout were stocked at the end of October below the freshwater license line midway down the estuary, and at the Route 70 Bridge. Some of these fish were preyed upon by seagulls as they were being stocked, and by cormorants shortly thereafter. There were also reports of people cast netting and angling for these trout for use as bait for striped bass. The majority of these trout, however, did move upstream to the tidal freshwater and freshwater portions of the river as evidenced by anglers' reported catches (and mostly, releases).

Therefore, in subsequent years, these trout have been stocked in the tidal freshwater section of the Manasquan River Wildlife Management Area (pdf, 490kb) where there has been no observed bird predation. Some of the brown trout remain there for the winter, while others move upstream to non-tidal freshwater where a number will stay for the rest of their lives, retaining normal brown trout coloration. During late winter or early spring, as the daylight increases and the water warms, some brown trout move downstream and out to the estuary where they find abundant forage.

The time individual brown trout spend in an estuary varies widely. Some may remain there for years before returning to freshwater during the fall and winter to attempt spawning. These fish are much heavier and silvery in coloration. Others remain in an estuary for much shorter periods, apparently making frequent migrations back

~~and forth well before they are even ready to spawn. Their coloration, too, changes just as frequently. During any of these migration scenarios, individual brown trout may choose to remain in freshwater where they take on and retain normal brown trout coloration.~~

The mature, heavier, deep bodied, silvery sea runs returning to freshwater during the fall and winter to attempt spawning, do not migrate together in large schools, but apparently return individually or in pairs. High river flows enable them to move upstream through riffles and past obstructions that they could not negotiate during low flows. When the river drops, they reside in deep water, awaiting another rise in water level to migrate further upstream.

Of the three species of trout raised at the Pequest Trout Hatchery (brook, brown, rainbow), browns are the most difficult to catch. Sea run brown trout are even more elusive. A casual approach to the stream bank will spook them. An angler can present a lure or bait to a sea run brown trout 500 times without a strike, but on the 501st time the fish may take it.

This cautious fish is eagerly sought by anglers in the United Kingdom (where they are referred to as "sea trout"). There, most sea run brown trout are caught at night. In some countries, fishing for sea run brown trout at night is banned or limited to only two hours after sunset. Some fish are caught on worms during the day after a rise in the river, as it is dropping but still discolored - conditions found on the Manasquan River.

Rivers in the U.K. have been maintained (cleared of debris, snags and obstructions) by private landowners for thousands of years. Today, the rivers are similarly maintained by the government. This affords the night angler relatively safe conditions in which to pursue these very wary fish. Free of major obstructions and snags, the only cover the sea run trout have are in deep pools and undercut banks. With this minimal cover they are still very difficult to catch.

In comparison, the Manasquan River is a wilderness. The river has numerous snags and obstructions. In addition there are, of course, pools and undercut banks. The stream banks are brushy, thorn filled and overgrown, and often lack any visible trail. Most angling has to be done by wading the river. Just imagine all of the places that a sea run brown trout can hide and take cover, especially in the more remote areas where these fish can remain undisturbed. Anglers who can safely access such areas, especially at night, increase their chances of catching a sea run brown trout.

Anglers seeking spring or fall stocked trout in close vicinity to regular season stocking points have sometimes been surprised with the catch of a large sea run. Examples: An angler fishing with his sons for fall stocked rainbow trout on 11/01/03 caught a 17", 2 lb. sea run brown (the fish was releasing eggs) on a salmon egg near Allaire State Park Village. Another angler fishing in the spring of '03 for recently stocked trout below Hospital Road caught a 19", 5 lb. sea run brown on a nightcrawler at dawn. Both those trout were released.

There were reports of 112 sea run trout being caught from 1998 through October 2004. Ninety-four (94), or 89%, of these were caught from the Squankum Dam through the Manasquan River Wildlife Management Area. Seventeen (17), or 15%, of these sea runs reportedly weighed from 5 to 13 pounds and would have qualified as the NJ State Record, a distinction waiting to be bestowed. Since 2004, there have been only a few, sporadic reports of catches. Rumors persist that a group of local anglers regularly catch sea run brown trout, but remain tight-lipped.

Any angler looking for a new trout fishing challenge, or the opportunity to catch a trophy size and a first-ever recognized state record fish, should consider a trip to the Manasquan. They may be rewarded with the catch of a lifetime.

Manasquan River Sea Run Brown Trout Fishing Tips

Fish the Manasquan River one to two days after a rain as it is becoming less muddy but not too clear. Evening through the night is the best time.

Mid-October to January 1: Bait is the most productive - pink, white and chartreuse spawn sacs, night crawlers, worms or killies. The sea runs move into freshwater and are actively feeding.

January 1 to February 1: The sea runs are spawning and not actively feeding but will strike at 2" long lures such as Rapalas, C.P. Swings and Rooster Tails. The most productive lure colors are silver, chartreuse and hot pink. Use a slow retrieve.

February through May: Use bait as described above.

The Manasquan River is very difficult to fish - it has brushy, overgrown banks. Anglers should use caution - the mud is very slippery, there are many deep holes and many underwater snags.

Expect to put in a lot of time. If you get a bite, that's a good day, if you hook one that's a great day, if you land one that's an unbelievable day.

Anglers should report their catches to biologist Mark Boriek at the division's Lebanon Fisheries Office at 908-236-2118. You can also contact Mark via e-mail at mark.boriek@earthlink.net. You can reveal as little or as much information about your catch as you wish. We just want to know that you are catching them.