

CHESUNCOOK LAKE

(Includes Ripogenus, Chesuncook, Caribou Lakes and Moose Pond)

T3 R11, T3 R12, T2 R12, T3 R13, T4 R12, T4 R13

T5 R12, T5 R13, and T6 R13, Piscataquis Co.

U. S. G. S. Harrington Lake, Ragged Lake, Chesuncook, and Caucomgomoc Lake, Me.

Fishes

Salmon	Longnose sucker
Brook trout (squaretail)	Minnnows
Lake trout (togue)	Blacknose dace
White perch	Common shiner
Yellow perch	Creek chub
Hornpout (bullhead)	Fallfish (chub)
Smelt	Golden shiner
Lake whitefish	Lake chub
White sucker	Cusk

Physical Characteristics

Area - 26,200 acres

Maximum depth - 150 feet

Temperatures

Surface - 69° F.

100 feet - 44° F.

Chesuncook Lake, the third largest lake in Maine, was formed by the construction of Ripogenus Dam in 1916. This 92 foot dam impounds Ripogenus Lake, Chesuncook Lake, Caribou Lake, Moose Pond, Umbazooksus Stream, Caucomgomoc Stream, and the West Branch of the Penobscot River. Chesuncook is used primarily for water storage and the production of hydro-electric power. The dam is also used to facilitate the driving of pulpwood down the river to Pemadumcook Lake.

Chesuncook has very good water quality in all basins for coldwater game fishes. Wind action keeps the upper layer of water at a temperature closely approximating the air temperature. This warm surface layer is 45 to 60 feet deep in all basins. Coldwater game fish concentrate in deeper, cooler water during the summer, so successful fishermen have to fish these depths.

The West Branch of the Penobscot River above Chesuncook Lake is the most important spawning tributary. Large numbers of salmon and trout migrate up this river in early fall to spawn. All tributaries should be kept free of obstructions and a steady flow of water should be maintained to encourage reproduction.

Chesuncook Lake should be managed for salmon and brook trout, with the greatest emphasis placed on salmon. The salmon are well established and are providing a good fishery. Brook trout cannot be expected to become more numerous because they are held back by competition from large numbers of perch, suckers, and chubs. Lake trout or togue are present, but their contribution to the fishery is negligible. The fluctuation of the lake level is detrimental to togue reproduction and precludes the possibility of togue ever becoming abundant.

A fishway has never been built in Ripogenus Dam because of the tremendous difficulty of successfully passing migrating fish beyond this barrier. The benefits of this fishway could not justify the expense of building and operating it.

A minimum flow of at least 100 c.f.s. should be maintained in the West Branch below Ripogenus. This minimum flow is necessary to protect the valuable fishery in the lower river.

Surveyed - August, 1960

Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Game

Chesunkcook Lake

(includes Ripogenus, Chesuncook, and Caribou Lakes and
Moose Pond)

T3 R11, T2 R12, T3 R12, T3 R13, T4 R12,
T4 R13, T5 R12, T5 R13, and T6 R13
Piscataquis County, Maine

area 26,200 acres

