

ONAWA LAKE  
Elliottsville Plt. and Willimantic Twp., Piscataquis Co.  
U.S.G.S. Sebec Lake, Maine

Fishes

Salmon	Minnows
Brook trout (squaretail)	Finescale dace
Smelt	Fallfish (chub)
Eel	Creek chub
White sucker	Common shiner
Longnose sucker	Banded killifish
	Redbreast sunfish

Physical Characteristics

Area — 1,344 acres	Temperatures
	Surface — 68°F.
Maximum depth — 84 feet	75 feet — 51°F.
Principal Fishery: Salmon, brook trout, smelt	

Onawa Lake is located in a very scenic mountain valley. Views of the surrounding mountains from the lake's surface make a visit to Onawa a memorable experience.

The water quality remains unchanged from that which was found during the original 1949 survey of Onawa Lake. It is excellent at all depths for coldwater game fish.

A brook trout population in Onawa Lake is maintained through natural reproduction. Large populations of suckers and minnows, favored by extensive areas of shallow water, compete with the trout for food and limit the potential of the lake for trout production. It is fortunate that natural barriers downstream on the outlet have prevented perch, bass and pickerel from moving into Onawa Lake.

Conditions are more favorable for the wild salmon population also found in Onawa Lake. Salmon growth is slower than the average for most Maine salmon lakes, but slow growth seems characteristic to the other waters in the drainage, including Long Pond upstream and Sebec Lake downstream. Smelts provide the major source of food for the salmon. Some of the smelts attain a size that provides a very desirable fishery.

Salmon spawning and nursery areas exist in the inlet and outlet. A dam on the outlet holds approximately four feet of water in the lake. At most water levels fish passage upstream into the lake is possible through a breach on the eastern side of this dam. This hole should be

maintained to allow passage back into the lake for adult salmon that drop down to spawn in the outlet, and for young salmon that are reared in the outlet.

In the past, a few lake trout have been caught in Onawa Lake. It is possible that the lake could support a small lake trout population, but the very small amount of deep, cold water available during the summer months limits Onawa Lake's potential as lake trout habitat. It cannot support a population large enough to provide a significant fishery.

Because of habitat conditions and the amount of spawning and nursery area available for salmon, Onawa Lake should be managed for its wild salmon population. A regulation prohibiting the use or possession of live fish as bait has been established to prevent introductions of new species that would compete with the existing coldwater game fish populations. The lake is open to ice fishing, with special restrictions on the number of lines permissible and on bag limits.

At the present time public access to the lake is limited.

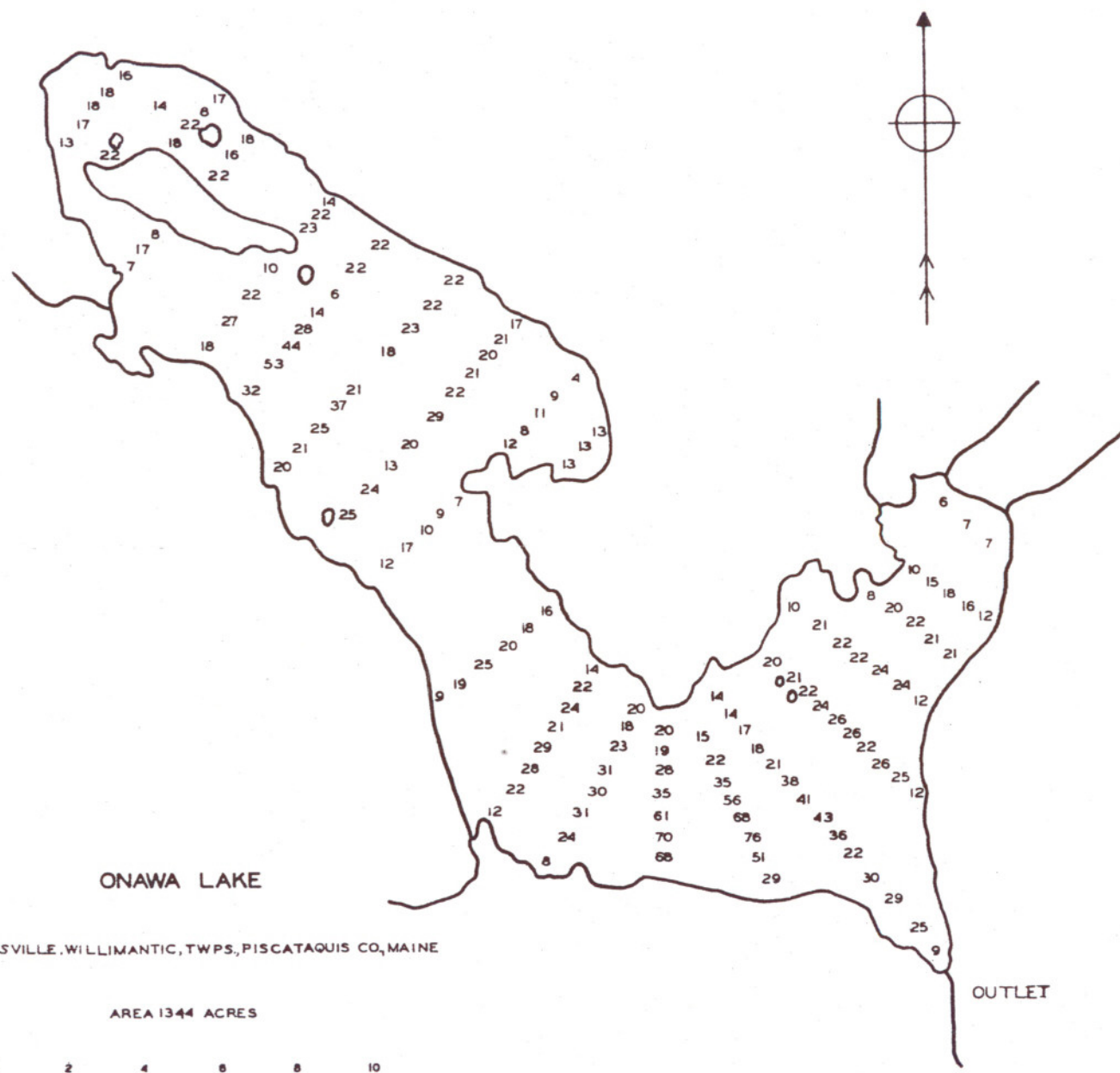
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ELLIOTTSVILLE, WILLIMANTIC, TWPS, PISCATAQUIS CO, MAINE

AREA 1344 ACRES



OUTLET