

Subject: : Conservation

Topic: : Stocked vs. Wild

Re: Stocked vs. Wild

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Date: : 2006/12/6 16:37:51

URL:

I am not at all upset by the article. I certainly wasn't misquoted. That is more than I can say for some other times I have been interviewed by reporters.

As for the use of the term 'mongrels' to describe hatchery trout, that was probably meant to be provocative. Writers and speakers often use statements like this to stir up the audience. I have been guilty of that myself. Statements like this get the audience's attention and it certainly accomplished that purpose. Besides, the terms "rubber trout" and "finless-witless-wonders" had already been much used, especially on this board.

As for the accuracy of the term 'mongrels' for hatchery trout, it is not really off the mark. For instance: the term mongrel is used to distinguish the product of an interbreeding of two breeds of dogs, all of which were derived from the wolf. The products of such an interbreeding are fertile.

This is not true for tiger trout. This more applicable term in this case would be hybrid, the offspring of which are often infertile. Tiger trout are more akin to the mule.

Hatchery trout are the product of interbreeding between many different populations/strains of the same species, often with rather different characteristics. Brown trout are a classic example: The various populations/strains, whatever you want to call them, were all mixed up when they were imported into this country from Europe. But all brown trout can and do freely breed and the young are equally fertile.

The genetics of hatchery brook trout have been similarly mixed after some 100 years of domestication. They can and do freely breed with native brook trout. But the characteristics that enable brook trout to survive in the wild are quite different from those needed to survive in the hatchery. So interbreeding of hatchery and domesticated strains is almost always detrimental.