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Subject: : Conservation

Topic: : Brook Trout Management Study in Western Maryland

Re: Brook Trout Management Study in Western Maryland

Author: : LongWader

Date: : 2013/2/13 18:47:38

URL:

An interesting Study. I would have no problem with zero harvest of brookies. Unlike some folks I feel that if a resource has the ability to produce larger brook trout that the larger Brookies would to some degree control the numbers of smaller fish once you have a sustainable population. I would also like to see more CR artificial only regs with a barbless hook stipulation to further facilitate quick releases that minimize stress on hooked fish.

While this is a good study the University of Maryland did a great multi-year study a number of years ago that was much more extensive and complete. At that time there was still a decent population of Brook Trout in the Gunpowder Watershed as well, but those fish are mostly gone except for a handful of small creeks and most of those brookies are under 6". At that time they study found summer run off from land areas with more that 4% hard surfaces like homes, cement, concrete, mccadam, spiked stream temperatures which killed brookies, sediment problems from farms degraded spawning and feeding habitat, acid rain and snow, were all contributing factors, however the biggest factor was competition from invasive species like brown trout and smallmouths that out competed brookies for food, breeding grounds, and most important the winter sanctuary areas brookies needed downstream in the deeper holes which they need if they are to attain any decent size.

Interestingly enough the last two hurricanes have washed/flushed many of the wild brown trout out of the Little Falls which is a tributary of the Gunpowder and this Winter for the first time I found some larger wild brookies wintering over in the larger holes in the Little falls. They must came down into the river from the few small creeks that support them. I also noticed a big increase in the number of young of the year fallfish now that most of the small, medium, and large wild brown trout are gone. Many of those wild browns from the Little Falls ended up being flushed down in the Gunpowder and they can't get back above the Falls on the Little Falls. It is interesting to see the brookies take advantage of these vacated areas, however in time I know the brownies will repopulate the Little Falls and the brookies will lose their winter sanctuaries again. Interestingly some smallmouths held in the stream even with the extreme floods and Maryland in their infinite wisdom is now restocking them in the Little Falls a long with brown trout. I guess they did not read the Study, or they are they don't know about the brook trout.