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Subject: : Conservation

Topic: : Brook Trout Management Study in Western Maryland

Re: Brook Trout Management Study in Western Maryland

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URL:

I call bull on the 90% mortality rate of using bait with trout. I agree it would be an order of magnitude larger than using artificial lures. But the study (Warner, 1979) states that the mortality rate on deeply hooked fish, **in which the hook was removed**, was 90%. That is a sub-sample of all the fish that were hooked with bait (50 out of 1221, 90% of the 50 died, which is NOT the same as 90% of the 1221). [Abstract](#) here. The same holds true for the Mason and Hunt (1967) study. The mortality rates overall are much lower if the hooks are left intact (67% of the trout survived), while hooks that were removed caused mortality in the fish at a rate of 88.5%. It just seems a bit sensationalist to me to include a picture of a dead brookie, with a caption stating that a snelled bait hook is in it's throat and then to selectively cite the scientific literature for mortality rates, picking the highest of the statistics, in the most likely scenario where the fish will die.

Regarding the study itself, its really tough to draw hard and fast conclusions about what influences the size of the fish, when recruitment rates and drought and flood events occur during the study. A single event may have more of an effect than angling pressure (with an emphasis on the may - I don't know that a drought is more detrimental to a trout than I or my fellow anglers is). It's equally hard for me to see if the Wild Brook Trout Enhancement program is working in PA - its not something you can effectively evaluate and quantify, if there are wild swings in variables such as weather or recruitment. You need a longitudinal study, over much more than 5 years, to draw any accurate conclusions.