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Subject: : Paflyfish General Forum

Topic: : Creel limit changes: typically not the effect that you might expect

Re: Creel limit changes: typically not the effect that you might expect

Author: : troutbert

Date: : 2013/9/9 9:19:38

URL:

Quote:

The\_Sasquatch wrote:

So are you guys saying that the premise that a super high biomass of fish in a small stream stunts the growth of fish is completely wrong?

I've been discussing this on a board for fishing in the Smokies. Many of them harvest down there. Several believe it is helpful to bringing back "larger" fish. One person said, "In a normal stream where you might have 300 trout per mile, I wouldn't advocate harvesting. In our streams we have anywhere from 3500-4500 fish per mile."

In PA, and elsewhere, if you make enough effort, you can find streams that are very lightly exploited, much less than average.

And what you find on those streams does not support your theory. The fish are not stunted. What you find are more LARGE trout than usual. And the fish are in good condition. They have not over-populated.

This is true of both brook trout and browns, but especially brook trout, because brook trout are easier to catch, so more vulnerable to getting cropped off at 7 inches.

So, what's the explanation? Why don't they over-populate? The reason is that where many of trout are allowed to live long enough to grow large, these big fish control the population through cannibalism.

The spawning produces more young fish than is needed to occupy all the slots in the stream, but the excess simply gets eaten.

And the reason there are more large trout in these streams is simply that it takes years for trout to grow large, and where they are not getting harvested, their odds of reaching an advanced age are much greater.

For ages anglers have gone to great lengths to fish places where very other people fish. Hiking into the wilderness, going on horseback, flying planes and helicopters at great expense etc.

And they do this so they can find places with big fish, and lots of them. If such very lightly exploited fisheries were all over-populated by skinny, stunted fish, people wouldn't go to such efforts.

