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Subject: : Conservation

Topic: : NY study on effects of stocking browns in water w/ brookies

Re: NY study on effects of stocking browns in water w/ brookies

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URL:

The paper is interesting but I'm not sure I buy some of their assumptions. Leaving aside the outputs from their neural network model the results they generate for the impact of stocked brown trout on top of brook trout are only as good as the assumptions they use to drive the model.

For example they cite two articles to support the fact that brookies are easier to catch than browns. One leads directly back to the NY "Trout" webpage (<http://www.dec.ny.gov/animals/7016.html>) which is a useless as supporting evidence (I'm surprised they got away with using this as a reference) and the other to Cooper's 1952 study on brook trout versus brown trout harvest rates. That may well be a good study (I've only read the abstract at the moment) but I'd like see how relevant it is to NY 60 years later.

KenU rightly points out the detrimental effects on Brook trout domestication but the same is true for brown trout. Are hatchery brown trout really good competitors of wild brook trout? And do they get caught significantly less than wild brook trout - they must be equally as dumb as the box of rocks hatchery brook trout after all. It could also be argued that they are a more prized target for the harvest crowd being bigger and more apparent.

In connection they authors also ignore modern C&R practice (unlikely to be a significant factor back in the 1950s). I wonder if wild brook trout would be harvested at 3 times the rate of browns given their possible smaller average size, C&R and increasing education of anglers to the parlous state of the species.

In general brown trout can impact wild brookies and KenU is right in some of the ways that is played out but in the wild these are often relatively subtle, condition dependent interactions and have to include other factors such as habitat change (increasing mean water temps for e.g.).

McKenna et al. seem to be taking a very coarse grind to look at what is inevitably a finely milled topic.

Anyway that's enough from me.