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Subject: : Paflyfish General Forum

Topic: : "wild" rainbows

Re: "wild" rainbows

Author: : pcray1231

Date: : 2009/6/24 8:26:32

URL:

Quote:

Physically connected? Maybe not. But I can show you a couple that are completely isolated by miles of heavily polluted streams.

1. There's still a question of timing. While acid mine drainage has had more lasting impacts on streams, for most areas the leanest brook trout period was the logging boom, as it effected nearly all streams in a watershed from headwaters to mouth, not just downstream of the pollution source allowing sanctuaries in the headwaters and tribs. Generally, the logging boom came before the coal boom. Those areas had been (perhaps) decimated, at least partially regrown, and the re-population well underway before the mines started the pollution.

2. While AMD does pose a significant barrier, it is my understanding that brook trout can survive in most of them. There may not be feed, and the eggs may not survive, so you won't get populations in them. But individual fish can pass through it unharmed. Fish occasionally travel for many miles, especially in places where habitat doesn't suit them. I may be wrong on this, would have to double check.

While I love my brookie fishin, I don't see a wild/native brookie as any more valuable than a wild brown or rainbow. A streambred wild fish is a jewel anyway you slice it, regardless of genetic origins. I fish a lot of brookie streams simply because I enjoy it, not to make any political statement about the value of a native over another form of wild fish.

And yes, they've determined that brook trout have many strains, perhaps a different one in each adjacent watershed. I believe the studies came from Maine where some of the populations are still intact as they once were. Cutthroats in the west are similar, and even in that much more undeveloped land they're losing some of the strains (greenbacks, yellowstone, etc.). There is, and always was, some natural mixing of the strains due to natural events. I would say here in PA, our actions have greatly accelerated the natural mixing, perhaps to the point of losing pure strains, and introduced new strains from the stockings. Where now we probably have the equivalent of a thousand different variations of mutts, genetically speaking, which may or may not still be genetically indistinguishable. If you want to find as close to a purebred original, I think you actually look to the bigger streams with historically larger, more stable populations, like BFC and Big Spring.