



Abstract

Local Breeding Centres: Engaging Local Anglers in Native Trout Conservation [†]

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Abstract: Trout (*Salmo trutta*) in the Extremadura region live in the Sierra de Gredos foothills, which is the southern distribution limit for this species in the Iberian Peninsula. Trout populations are declining mostly due to water resource development schemes—mainly cherry orchards—increases in temperatures due to climate change, the fragmentation of rivers, and habitat alterations. The Fisheries and Aquaculture Service of the Extremadura Government has been working on the enhancement of river habitats and biota. To improve trout populations, several management actions have been taken, such as so-called “Local Breeding Centres” (LBC), which have provided collaboration between local anglers and fishery technicians since 2019. Around late October, expert local anglers make sure breeding males and females are captured and are temporarily kept in breeding centres supervised by fish specialists. Genetic samples are collected from every individual to guarantee conservation units. When trout reach annual sexual maturity around late November, technicians assist with manual spawning, and the eggs are fertilized. Immediately after, adults are returned to the original river point where they were caught, and the eggs are transported to “Centro de Salmónidos de Jerte” (an aquaculture centre) in order to be incubated in controlled conditions. Once the critic larvae term is over, juvenile fish are moved back into the river. In the spring of 2020, around 3600 eggs and 7000 young fish were repopulated. Every year, there are more angler societies showing interest in participating in this program to improve trout populations in rivers. Thanks to these efforts, local citizens have become involved in environmental action, and help the government with the preservation of habitat, flora and fauna. Although this may seem an irrelevant measure, cooperation between the government and citizens is crucial, as it helps to promote ecological awareness.

Keywords: trout; conservation; salmonids; endangered; Iberian Peninsula; angler



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