Fish story: Salmon eaten in US modified even before genetic engineering

The GLP aggregated and excerpted this blog/article to reflect the diversity of news, opinion and analysis.

As strange as the process will be for bringing the AquAdvantage [salmon] to our tables, it is only the latest phase in a 300-year-long project that has progressively disfigured the relationship between American salmon and American consumers. When colonists first arrived on the East Coast of the United States, in the seventeenth century, wild Atlantic salmon were present in commercially exploitable numbers in every major river system from Connecticut to Maine. Among the first things that settlers did was build small-scale dams, primarily for mill power, so that they might have flour in addition to fish. . . and fish numbers dwindled to the point where most runs of Atlantic salmon qualify for endangered-species status.

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Even wild Alaskan salmon are becoming something of a hybrid. A system of hatcheries installed throughout the southern part of the state in the latter half of the twentieth century now “supplements” Alaskan rivers with almost a third of the salmon smolts that migrate out to sea every year. Is a salmon that is hatched and raised to toddlerhood in a human-run facility still a “wild” fish?

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Seventy per cent of U.S.-caught wild salmon is exported abroad, mostly to Europe and Japan. . . about two-thirds of the salmon consumed by Americans is farmed in other countries. Often, it comes from Chile, a place that has no native salmon of its own and where introduced coho and Atlantics frequently escape their farms to become invasive species.

Read full, original post: Genetically Engineered Fish and the Strangeness of American Salmon