March 31th 2021

News Letter 5

The Danube bassin

A review was a major piece of collation and synthesis of published material prepared by Rachel Ainsworth and Ian Cowx at Hull International Fishery Institute, in cooperation with FAO.

It presents summary information on 45 river and great lake basins of the world, which support inland fisheries. The information presented is drawn from published information in peer-reviewed journals as well as grey literature. Each basin summary is presented in a common format, covering the description of the fishery, estimates of catch and numbers of people engaged in the fishery, important biodiversity features and threats to the fishery. An analysis of the replacement costs of inland fish of the basin is also presented. This is expressed in terms of the water, land and greenhouse gas footprint that would arise if the inland fish that are currently produced had to be replaced with other forms of food (such as aquaculture fish, livestock or field crops).

Presenting information collated at river basin level is intended to assist those who are trying to present a holistic view of inland fisheries across river basin and how they interact with other sectors and their impacts. It also provides a better way of framing the importance of rivers , their floodplains and fisheries.

Lien vers Danube river

"A review of major river basins and large lakes relevant to inland fisheries" - *Simon Funge-Smith, Rachel Ainsworth, Ian Cowx and the FAO inland fisheries team.* is now available online at: https://urlz.fr/fjiZ

Professional fishing at sea : Europe supports overfishing !

Despite a number of statements, the European Commission and the European Parliament support the construction of new fishing vessels

« *The octopus won. The powerful tentacles of industrial lobbies have had the upper hand over out-of-the-ordinary mobilization ... to enforce Europe's international commitments,"* says Claire Nouvian, founder of the Bloom Association (an association that fights overfishing at sea).

This disappointment of the president of the NGO specialising in the defence of the oceans is the result of the vote of the European Parliament's fisheries committee in November 2020. The April 2019 vote by MEPs on the allocation of the six billion euros of the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF) for the period 2021-2027. This vote allows for public subsidies to modernize the fleet and build new vessels, which were banned in 2004.

"For *more than 20 years, all scientists have been trying to say that funding the construction of new ships is about financing overfishing. Despite the commitments made by the European Union to ban such subsidies globally by 2020, as part of the* Sustainable Development and while *69% of European fish stocks are still overfished, MEPs are reviving the infernal machine of overfishing in Europe. It's suicidal!* Matthieu Colléter, head of institutional relations for the NGO, said. It is also questionable whether these aids mainly benefit large corporations and not artisanal fishermen.

What about electric fishing?

On[1] July 2021, the total ban on electric fishing will be effective. The Bloom association that promotes sustainable fishing remains mobilized The Netherlands will comply with the regulation?

The association filed two complaints with the European Commission, which had to admit that there was indeed a violation of European law. 62 illegally issued exemptions for scientific research have been removed. At present, there are 22 exemptions, seven of which are still illegal. The Dutch Minister, after taking advice from the electric fishing lobbies, decided to circumvent the regulation. It proposed a rotation of the vessels so that no more than 15 equipped vessels fished at the same time. This misinterpretation of the regulation has been validated by the Commission!

We can guess the Bloom association remains very mobilized on the subject. This is all the more important because England's withdrawal from the European Union has important consequences for artisanal fishing in the English Channel. Small boats are discarded in less fishy areas!

Is restriction of angling lead justified ?

The European Chemicals Agency (ECHA) has also called for an immediate ban on the use of lead sinkers when they are deliberately dropped to the waterbed – a technique commonly known as lead drop-off and popular with carp anglers.

A ban on the sale and use of lead sinkers and lures is proposed with an implementation time period of three years for those weighing under 50g and five years for those over 50g from the date a ban is brought into force.

At the request of the European Commission, ECHA has been assessing the health and environmental risks posed by the use of lead in ammunition for hunting and outdoor sports, including fishing, and concluded a restriction is justified, estimating that at least 127 million birds are at risk of lead poisoning each year. It added: “Citizens are also exposed to lead when making fishing sinkers and lures at home. Exposure to the substance is especially harmful to neurological development of children.”

There will now be a six-month consultation period during which interested parties are invited to provide their arguments – backed up by ‘robust’ evidence – starting on March 24th.

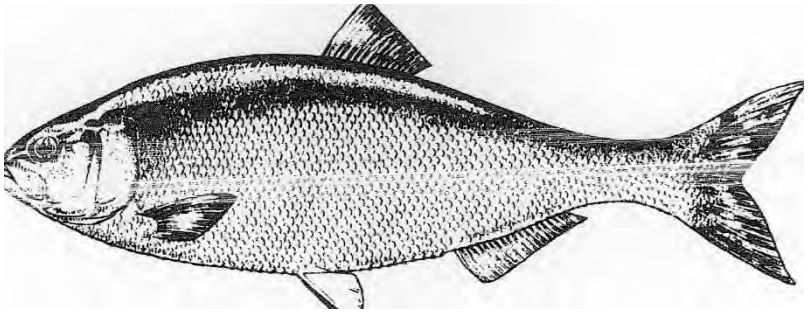
After the consultation ECHA’s scientific Committees for Risk Assessment and Socio-Economic Analysis will produce their opinions which are expected by mid-2022. The European Commission, together with the 27 EU member states will then take the decision on the restrictions and the conditions based on ECHA’s proposal and the deliberations of the committees.

More information : https://urlz.fr/fj8f

Wels predation on migrating shads in Garonne river (France)

''The giants' feast'': predation of the large introduced European catfish on spawning migrating allis shads

By Stephanie Boulêtreau . Thomas Fauvel . Marion Laventure . Rémi Delacour . William Bouyssonnie´ . Frédéric Azémar . Frédéric Santoul



European catfish *Silurus glanis* is a large non-native opportunistic predator able to develop hunting strategy in response to newly available prey where it has been introduced. Migrating spawning anadromous prey such as allis shad *Alosa alosa* could represent this available and energy-rich food resource. Here, we report an impressive catfish hunting behavior on shad spawning act in one of the main spawning grounds in Europe (Garonne River, Southwest France). Shad spawning act consists of at least one male and one female swimming side by side, trashing the water surface with their tail which, therefore, produces a splashing noise audible from the river bank. The catfish hunting behavior on shad spawning act was studied, at night, during spring months, using both auditory and video survey. Simultaneously, catfish individuals were fishing to analyze their stomach content. Catfish disturbed 12% of the 1024 nocturnal spawning acts we heard, and this proportion increased to 37% among the 129 spawning acts when estimated with low-light camera recording. Stomach content analyses on 251 large catfish individuals (body length[128 cm) caught in the same river stretch revealed shad represented 88.5% of identified prey items in catfish diet. This work demonstrates that European catfish predation must be considered as a significant factor of mortality of allis shad. In a context of the extension of the European catfish range area in western and southern European freshwaters, this new trophic impact, with other ones previously described for salmon or lamprey, has to be considered in European conservation plans of anadromous species.

Springer Nature B.V. 2020

More informations : https://urlz.fr/fj7M