A simple way of avoiding feed wastage in European seabass,

Self-feeding systems allow fish to freely express feeding activity. A simple rod at the water surface can act as a trigger and provide fish with a way of obtaining pellets from a feeder. Such a rod presented to experienced European seabass, Dicentrarchus labrax, may lead to feed wastage, probably as a result of unintentional fish contacts with the trigger. Trigger protection screens have been designed to prevent fish contacting the trigger by chance, and the efficacy of such screens was tested. Nocturnal and diurnal feed delivery and feed wasted were compared under conditions where the rod was unprotected or protected by semi-cylindrical or cylindrical screens. Tests were conducted using an unrestricted self-feeding regime (reward: 0.2 g pellet per kg of body weight and per fish contact) in juvenile seabass (57 g body weight) fed for 28 days at 21.3 °C. Fish were subjected to a 4-h L:20-h D (light:dark) photoperiod. The daily feed demand pattern and the nocturnal and diurnal feed wastage were recorded. Fish activated the trigger predominantly at night, except in the case of one group exposed to a trigger protected by a semi-cylindrical screen. in the latter, triggering activity was progressively distributed throughout the light:dark cycle. The cylindrical screens markedly reduced feed wastage and seabass were able to locate and activate the trigger (even in total darkness) to obtain a reward.

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