

— Are sex ratios in wild European sea bass (

Sex ratios in farmed European sea bass are highly biased towards males (75 to 95%), which is problematic for aquaculture. In this mini-review, we re-analyse fisheries literature data about sex ratios in wild sea bass from 13 population samples, representing altogether 4889 individuals covering the major part of the distribution range of the species. We find that as a whole, the sex ratio of wild populations is biased towards females (59.4% females, $p < 0.001$), but that the sex ratio of the younger fish (<30 cm total length) is balanced (52.0% females, $p = 0.15$), while the sex ratio of the older fish is heavily biased towards females (69.5% females, $p < 0.01$). Possible causes of these differences (differential longevity, biased sampling) are discussed. When age-group sex ratios are available (three population samples out of 13), significant variation between age groups appears, part of which is most likely of environmental origin. This study shows that the excess of males in culture is not a characteristic of the species, but rather a consequence of the environments used in culture, interacting with a complex system where both environmental and genetic influences govern sex determination in sea bass.

Auteurs du document : Marc Vandeputte, Edwige Quillet, Béatrice Chatain

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