

Do otters target the same fish species and sizes as anglers? A case study from a lowland trout stream (Czech Republic)



Stocking of hatchery-reared fish into streams is a common practice in fisheries industry as it provides catches for recreational anglers and support for native fish populations. The Eurasian otter *Lutra lutra* is one of the most important freshwater piscivorous predators in Europe. Impact of otters on stocked fish is a source of conflict between fisheries industry and environmental protection. This study aimed to describe differences between otter diet and catches of anglers on a lowland trout stream with salmonid stocking. Otter diet was studied during winter, using spraint analysis. Fish dominated otter diet (85% of biomass). Gudgeon *Gobio gobio* was the most important otter prey (38% of biomass). Catches of otters and catches of anglers on the stream were significantly different. Otters mostly preyed upon small-growing fish species of medium or no angling value while anglers took large-growing fish species of medium and high angling value. Otters took fish with average weight of 10 g while anglers took fish with average weight of 290 g. Stocked salmonids made up 13% of estimated biomass in otter diet. Otters targeted significantly different fish species of

different sizes than anglers did.

Auteurs du document : Roman Lyach, Martin Čech

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