

Synthesis of thermal tolerances of the common freshwater fish species in large Western Europe rivers



The effects of industrial cooling water on fish communities were widely debated at the end of the seventies, when large thermal power plants were being developed. This led to numerous research programs on thermal tolerance in fish. The recent warming climatic period and especially the 2003 heat wave have brought thermal biology back to center stage. The work presented here has consisted in analyzing historical and contemporary literature to update basic knowledge on thermal tolerances of 19 riverine fish species. These data were then validated and completed by European fish specialists. We finally proposed a synthesis, based on more than 300 references, which details thermal tolerances for the entire life cycle: reproduction, embryonic, larval, juvenile and adult life stages. This updated material is of great importance to an understanding of the trends observed in fish communities or for forecasting future behavior in climate change scenarios.

Auteurs du document : Y. Souchon, L. Tissot

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