

6.

FISH



THE FAUNA OF SZIGETKÖZ 2.

SZIGETKÖZ

It is located between the Old Danube and the Moson-Danube. It is made up of two larger units, Upper and Lower Szigetköz, and several smaller units. It covers an area of nearly 400 km², most of which is covered by water. It is home to many rare species of plants and animals. In 1987, Szigetköz was declared a landscape protection area in order to protect its unique water system and its characteristic flora and fauna. The life of the people who settled here has always been defined by the Danube. The former occupations (floodplain grazing, towing, milling, gold panning), which were linked to the water, have almost completely disappeared. Previously, the fish population of the Danube was legendary. Today, due to pollution and the diversion of the Danube, the habitat needed for natural reproduction has been reduced and fish stocks have significantly decreased.

RIVER LAJTA

The Lajta used to be called Litaha (Mud River) by the Hungarians, because its water became muddy during heavy rains. The total length of the River Lajta is 182 km, with only 18.4 km in Hungary. In Mosonmagyaróvár it is divided into several branches, which makes our city a city of rivers. The river is suitable for kayaking and canoeing. The renovation of its dam, which included the construction of a fish ladder, was completed in 2015.

WHAT DOES “INVASIVE SPECIES” MEAN?

An invasive species is a foreign species that has invaded an area where it has not been previously present. By entering the area, it disrupts the ecosystem there. Invasive fish species in the Castle Lake are the Pumpkinseed and the Brown Bullhead.

How does the appearance of invasive species upset the balance of the environment?

The appearance of invasive species in an area upsets the biological balance. Native species in the area have settled without human intervention, adapting to the habitat. They are more resistant to pests and diseases typical to that area. When a 'foreign' species enters (usually with human intervention), the struggle for survival between the species begins. Native species are less resistant to new species, so they can become extinct and disappear from the area.

The reason for settlement and spreading might be:



Result of natural change

- Changes in the living conditions of species - climate change
- Changes in species characteristics - adaptation, evolution

Result of human activity

- Deliberate exploitation in natural waters - planting
- Breeding in fishponds - escape
- Pet shops - release
- Contact with other aquatic organisms, transport means - introduction
- Removing natural barriers - connectivity

Fishes of lakes and Castle-lake



1,2 m

European Carp (Cyprinus carpio): It prefers nutrient-rich, still or slow-flowing waters that warm up quickly and are densely overgrown with reeds and pondweed. Its taste is determined by the water it comes from. Well adapted to different water qualities. It can grow up to 1.2 m.



max 25cm

Pumpkinseed (Lepomis gibbosus): It came to our country as an invasive species. It was first noticed by aquarists for its colourful appearance and toughness. It occurs in almost all waters, except cold, fast-flowing streams. Tastes better than the bream.



15-20cm

Common Bleak (Alburnus alburnus): It likes artificial reservoirs where the water is constantly changing. It groups together in small shoals. Our first fishing experiences were related to this fish, as using bait fish is the first thing you learn in the fishing school.



50-70cm

Asp (Aspius aspius): It prefers the backflow parts that follow the fast-flowing sections, where the water is rich in oxygen. Predatory fish. It hunts small fish in small groups or alone. If prepared properly, it has a tasty but very bony meat.

Big fish in big rivers, past and present



7m!

Sturgeon (Huso huso): In addition to pollution and river regulation, the disappearance of beluga from our rivers has been caused by overfishing. It was a symbol of wealth and abundance. Its meat and its roe are first class, and this is what caused its demise in Hungary, as its roe is used to make beluga caviar. The biggest beluga of Szigetköz, 230 cm long and 102 kg, was caught in 1958. A statue was erected to it in Ásványráró. It can reach 7 m!



2.3m

Wels Catfish (Silurus glanis): The largest predatory fish in our country. It has tiny, sharp teeth reminding of a grater. To increase its body weight by one kilogram, it has to consume 9-11 kg of food. It always raids from deep to shallow water, creating eddies. Its meat is not bony and low in fat. It can reach 2.3 m.



20-30cm

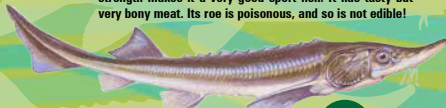
Tench (Tinca tinca): It usually lives in slow-flowing rivers with dense vegetation and in muddy, warm lakes. Avoids light, hides at the bottom of the lake during the day, only active at dusk. Feeds on mosquito larvae, worms, snails, and plants.

Fishes of small rivers and of the River Lajta



40-50cm

Common Barbel (Barbus barbus): It prefers deep, fast-flowing, oxygen-rich rivers. It likes sewage outlets. Its strength makes it a very good sport fish. It has tasty but very bony meat. Its roe is poisonous, and so is not edible!



1m

Sterlet (Acipenser ruthenus): Native freshwater sturgeon species. It prefers the gravel bottoms of larger rivers and might occur in lakes, but does not reproduce. Only a fraction of its population has survived in our country, therefore, fishing for it is forbidden. Its meat is tasty and not bony. It can reach 1 m.

WHICH FISH ARE WE TALKING ABOUT?

Hungarian regional names for them: bőke, bőkle, dobóka, kisz, kis szélhal, pehelyhal, szélhajtó kűsz, pészmetke hal, szellőkeszeg, snóci, snájder, ruszli, ribahal, rütyőke, tejhal, ünhal, sneci, lamli.

Alburnus



EXPLORE!

How can a Common Rudd appear in a garden pond?

In the spring, when fish spawn, the roes cling to the feet and plumage of waterfowl with mud. From there they are easily transported to closed ponds, where they can develop in ideal conditions. Observe what birds you can see around Castle Lake!



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MAP OF THE PATH
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