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**Current status of population of wrasse *Symphodus ocellatus* (Forskål, 1775) in the Tiligul estuary**

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During 2000-2004 population of wrasse *Symphodus ocellatus*, a rare species in north-western part of the Black Sea that registered to Red Data Book of Ukraine and the Black Sea Red Data Book was investigated. Long underwater observations, and the scientific fishing with close-meshed nets in different places of the Odessa Bay confirmed its absence in the sea. Tiligul Estuary where its large isolated population is saved still remains the only one habitat of the wrasse in north part of the Black Sea.

It was determined that wrasse is the mass representative of fish in the estuary. In number it yields only to godies and siverside. The number ranged from 0,5 to 5 ex./m<sup>2</sup> on bottom of rocky shallowed waters (depths from 0,3 to 2,0 m) grown with different macrophytes. At greater depths (2-9 m) wrasse occurred rarely, no more than 1-2 examples within 10 minutes period of underwater observations.

It is found out that in contrast to marine population (for example, in Crimea) spawning period of wrasse from the Tiligul estuary is more prolonged. Females with eggs (IV stage of development) are met up to the beginning of September. Analysis of sex composition (n=54) has shown that males dominate in estuary population (71,4 %). The development of spawn occurs in "nests" of algae (*Cladophora*, *Haetomorpha*), which are build by big males. There are observations that several females spawn in one nest. The nests are 20 cm in length and more. Their main quantity was discovered on the depths of 0,5-1,5 m among stones, on stones and in unthick sea grass *Zostera*.

Analysis of morphometric characteristics has shown that over several years individuals of all size groups are met in the estuary. Reliable differences in common and standart length of males and females weren't revealed. In May 2002 wrasses with maximal size (110-117 mm lengthwise, 3-5 years old) were met, in August 2001 it was about 70 mm (1-2 years old). All samples with the length less than 46 mm were fish of this year.

**Резюме**

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**СОВРЕМЕННОЕ СОСТОЯНИЕ ПОПУЛЯЦИИ ГЛАЗЧАТОЙ ЗЕЛЕНУШКИ (*Symphodus ocellatus* (Forskål, 1775) В ТИЛИГУЛЬСКОМ ЛИМАНЕ**

Изучены некоторые особенности биологии и экологии редкой в Северном Причерноморье глазчатой зеленушки *Symphodus ocellatus* (Forskål, 1775). Определено, что в Тилигульском лимане существует устойчивая популяция губана, отличающаяся от морской более растянутым нерестовым периодом, более мелкими размерными характеристиками и, вероятно, меньшей продолжительностью жизни. Изучен половой состав и особенности размножения в природной популяции.