

Aspects of the occurrence of intersex individuals in sturgeon populations

Summary

In contrast to the occurrence of hermaphroditic individuals as a reproductive strategy, which is observed in many fish species, intersexuality in sturgeon populations is considered pathological. The presence of intersex individuals has been reported for almost all sturgeon species, for both wild and cultured populations. Intersex individuals usually constitute a small percentage of wild populations. Intersexuality in wild populations is thought to be caused by pollution of the environment with Endocrine Disrupting Chemicals (EDC). Intersex individuals have also been found in cultured populations of various sturgeon species. In aquaculture, the high percentage of intersex individuals is probably partly due to the high content of soy and other phytoestrogen-rich plants in the diet of the sturgeon.

KEY WORDS: sturgeon, intersex, gonads, phytoestrogens