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## Comparative studies on length-weight relationship and condition factor of *Cyprinus carpio* and *Schizothorax niger* from Dal lake, Kashmir

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**Abstract**

The present study was carried out to calculate the length-weight relationship and condition factor of *Cyprinus carpio* var. *communis* and *Schizothorax niger*. A total of 360 samples each of *C. carpio* var. *communis* and *S. niger* were collected from Dal lake from August 2018 to July 2019. Length-weight relationship of *C. carpio* var. *communis* and *S. niger* both indicates negative allometric growth. The functional form of Length-weight relationship of *C. carpio* was fitted as  $\text{Log } W = -3.984 + 2.615 \text{ Log } L$  (Pooled),  $\text{Log } W = -3.754 + 2.516 \text{ Log } L$  (Male) and  $\text{Log } W = -4.162 + 2.692 \text{ Log } L$  (Female) while for *S. niger* Length-weight relationship was established as  $\text{Log } W = -3.577 + 2.399 \text{ Log } L$  (Pooled),  $\text{Log } W = -3.644 + 2.424 \text{ Log } L$  (Male) and  $\text{Log } W = -4.162 + 2.692 \text{ Log } L$  (Female). The value of growth coefficient (b) for pooled data was found to be greater for *C. carpio* (2.615) than that of *S. niger* (2.399) which indicates better growth in *C. carpio* as compared to *S. niger*. The value of the condition factor (K) of the common carp ranged from 1.151 to 1.928 while as in case of *S. niger* it ranged from 0.966 to 1.32 which indicates better growth of *C. carpio*.

**Keywords:** Length-weight relationship, condition factor, *Cyprinus carpio* var. *communis*, *Schizothorax niger*, Dal lake

**1. Introduction**

The common carp (*Cyprinus carpio*) is one of the world's most invasive fish (Kulhanek *et al.*, 2011) [32]. It is a freshwater cyprinid fish that is widely farmed and distributed in the world. It occurs in shallow ponds, lakes rich in vegetation and slow moving rivers. It burrows in mud in the dry season or winter and tolerates cold, organic pollutants and low oxygen concentration in water (Weber *et al.*, 2010) [61]. Since it is a fast growing and hardy fish that can withstand adverse environmental conditions, it has been successfully introduced into fresh waters throughout the world (Seegers *et al.*, 2003; Golemi *et al.*, 2013) [52, 23]. The common carp was brought to India in 1939 from Sri Lanka and introduced into the Nilgiris. Later, in 1947 this species was introduced in Nainital and other lakes of Kumaon and was carried to Bangalore (Fotedar and Qadri, 1974) [20]. It is an ideal species for cold water of the hills and was introduced in Dal Lake of Kashmir in 1956. It has, since then, shown remarkable adaptation in various water bodies of the state, and constitutes a major fishery of flat land temperate waters of Kashmir (Fotedar and Qadri, 1974) [20].

The introduction of the exotic common carp caused a sharp decline in the population and of Schizothoracine fishes in Kashmir valley (Yousuf and Qadri, 1992; Zutshi and Gopal, 2000) [64, 65, 67]. Among schizothoracids, *Schizothorax niger* is a valuable fish of Kashmir region, but is now, in stiff competition with other exotic fishes including *C. carpio* (Yousuf, 1996) [62]. *S. niger* locally known as Ael Gad is a prized fish of Kashmir and belongs to family Cyprinidae. It is a lacustrine fish, occurring in lakes of Kashmir in good numbers including Dal Lake. As all other schizothoracids show breeding migrations, moving upstream to spawn, however, *S. niger* does not show any such migration and spawns in the shallow peripheral areas of the lake in close vicinity of springs on sandy bottoms (Vass and Raina, 1979) [59]. It contributes significantly to capture fisheries landings of the flatland lakes of the valley, especially Dal, Manasbal and Wular.

Several authors have reported that the introduction of common carp during mid-fifties in Kashmir has severely affected the indigenous schizothoracid population (Fotedar and Qadri, 1974; Saxena and Koul, 1966; Subla, 1967; Qureshi *et al.*, 1971) [20, 51, 55, 45]. Three varieties of *C. carpio* namely *C. carpio* var. *communis* (scale carp), *C. carpio* var. *specularis* (mirror carp) and *C. carpio* var. *nudus* (leather carp) are known worldwide.

The introduction of scale carp and mirror carp in the valley waters have led to the predominance of these exotic species over *Schizothorax* population (Foteder and Qadri, 1974) [20]. Length-weight relationships of fishes are important in fisheries biology because they allow the estimation of the average weight of the fish of a given length group by establishing a mathematical relation between the two (Beyer, 1987) [10]. Length weight relationships are needed to estimate weight from length because direct weight measurements can be time consuming in the field (Koutrkis and Tsiklirs, 2003; Sinoveic *et al.*, 2004) [31]. Like any other morphometric character, the length-weight relationship can be used as a character for the differentiation of taxonomic units and the relationship changes with various developmental events in life such as metamorphosis, growth and the onset of maturity (Thomas *et al.*, 2003) [58]. The relative condition factor is an important quantitative parameter of well being of the fish in question and by extension its health status (Blackwell *et al.*, 2000) [12]. It determines present and future population success by its influence on growth, reproduction and survival. Condition factor is an important concept in fisheries management and can be used to assess the health and potential of any fishery to support the fishing pressure. It is estimated by comparing individual fish weight of a given length to a standard weight. It is assumed that heavier fish reflect a healthier physiological state (Ricker, 1975) [48].

## 2. Materials and Methods

A total of 360 specimens each of *C. carpio* and *S. niger* in the length range of 114.20mm to 294.81mm and 122.07mm to 280.00mm and weight range of 20.5g to 350.0g, 23.5 to 232.0g respectively were collected from the Dal Lake and were transported to the FRM laboratory at Faculty of Fisheries, Rangil in insulated boxes containing ice packs. The fish samples was cleaned under running tap water, and then dried with a clean cotton cloth. After cleaning, total length of the individuals was measured using digital Vernier calliper (Trusize) and weight by electronic digital weighing balance (Shimadzu) upto the nearest 0.01millimeter (mm) and 0.1 g respectively.

**2.1** The length-weight relationship was estimated using the allometric formula proposed by Le-Cren (1951) [35] using the equation.

$$W=aL^b$$

where, W = Weight of fish (g) L = Length of fish (cm) a = y-intercept or the initial growth coefficient b = Slope or the growth coefficient. "a" and "b" will be estimated by the following formulae:

$$a = \bar{y} - b\bar{x} \text{ and,}$$

$$b = \frac{[n\sum xy - \sum x \sum y]}{[n\sum x^2 - (\sum x)^2]}$$

To test "b" value against the value of "3", student's t-test will be employed to predict any significant deviation. The t-statistics will be calculated as follows:

The hypothesis given is,

H<sub>0</sub>: Growth is isometric i.e. H<sub>0</sub>: b=3

H<sub>1</sub>: Growth is not isometric i.e. H<sub>1</sub>: b≠3

The t statistics used are given by:

$$t = \frac{b-3}{S_b}$$

Where, S<sub>b</sub>=Standard error of "b" and t has (n-2) degrees of freedom.

$$S_b = \sqrt{\frac{1}{(n-2)} * [(S_y/S_x)^2 - b^2]}$$

Where, "S<sub>x</sub>" and "S<sub>y</sub>" are the standard deviations of x and y respectively. The t-value will be compared with t-table value for (n-2) degrees of freedom at 1% and 5% significance level.

## 2.2 Condition factor

Condition factor (K) was used to calculate Fulton's Condition Factor Index using the following equation (Fulton, 1904):

$$K = \frac{W}{L^3} \times 10^5$$

Where, K is the condition factor, W is the weight of fish in grams (g) and L is the total length in mm.

## 3 Results

**3.1 Length-weight relationship:** The length-weight regression equations obtained for *C. carpio* were:

**Male:** Log W = -3.754 + 2.516 Log L (r<sup>2</sup> = 0.838)

**Female:** Log W = -4.162 + 2.692 Log L (r<sup>2</sup> = 0.864)

**Combined:** Log W = -3.984 + 2.615 Log L (r<sup>2</sup> = 0.851).

The calculated 'b' value of length-weight relationships was obtained as 2.516 for males, 2.692 for females and 2.615 for pooled data. In order to test whether the pooled length-weight relationship follows the isometric growth pattern or not, students t-test was applied. The hypothesis given is:

H<sub>0</sub>: Growth is isometric i.e., H<sub>0</sub>: b=3

H<sub>1</sub>: Growth is not isometric i.e., H<sub>1</sub>: b≠3

The calculated "t" value (-4.71) was found to be significant at 1% level indicating negative allometric growth for *C. carpio*. The values of 'b' indicated that growth was more pronounced in case of females (2.692) than males (2.516).

The regression equations obtained for *S. niger* were:

**Male:** Log W = -3.644 + 2.424 Log L (r<sup>2</sup> = 0.818)

**Female:** Log W = -3.455 + 2.349 Log L (r<sup>2</sup> = 0.814)

**Combined:** Log W = -3.577 + 2.399 Log L (r<sup>2</sup> = 0.824).

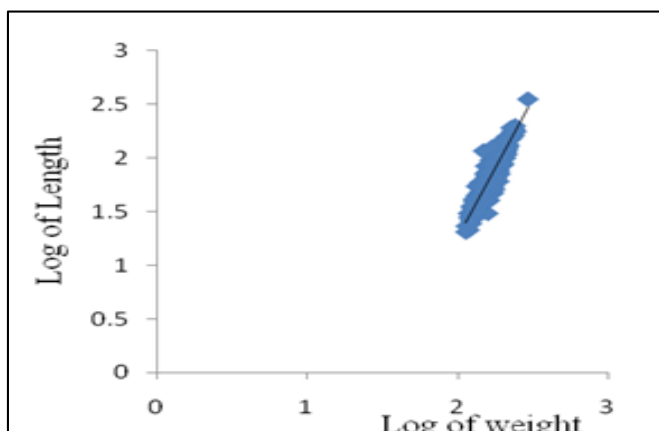
The calculated 'b' value of length-weight relationships was found as 2.424 for males, 2.349 for females and 2.399 for pooled data. In order to test whether the pooled length-weight relationship follows the isometric growth pattern or not, students t-test was applied. The hypothesis given is:

H<sub>0</sub>: Growth is isometric i.e., H<sub>0</sub>: b=3

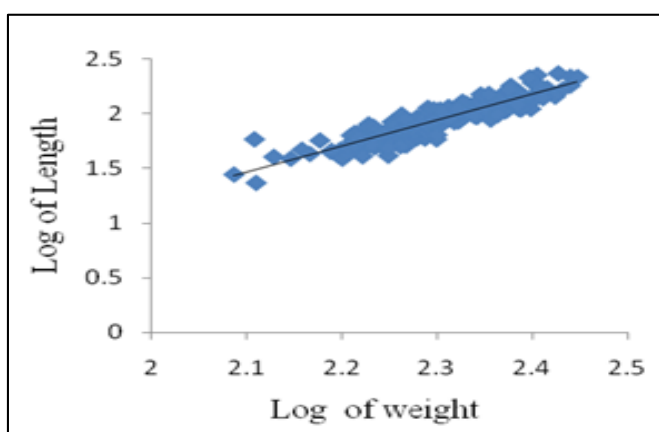
H<sub>1</sub>: Growth is not isometric i.e., H<sub>1</sub>: b≠3

The calculated “t” value (-8.82) was found to be significant at 1% level indicating negative allometric growth for *S.niger*. Males showed higher values of 'b' as compared to females showing better growth.

From the above equations the ‘b’ value of combined data of *C. carpio* var. *communis* was found greater (2.615) than that of *S. niger* (2.399) which indicates better growth of common carp than the snow trout.

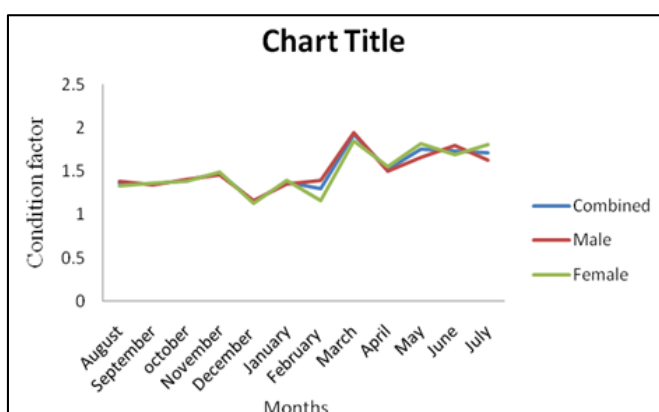


**Fig 1:** Logarithmic relationship between length and weight of *C. carpio* var. *communis* (Pooled)

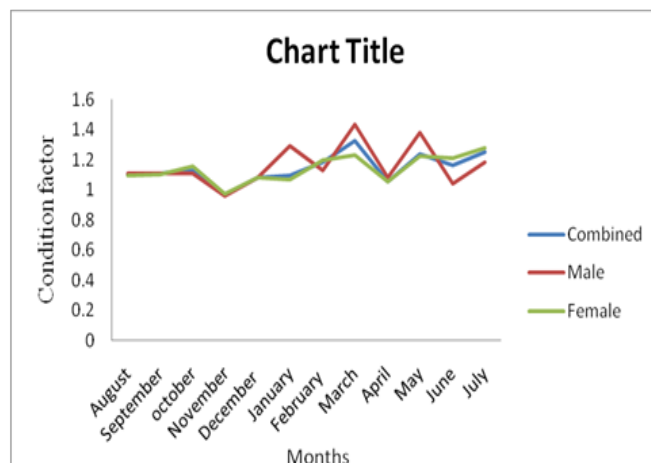


**Fig 2:** Logarithmic relationship between length and weight of *S. niger* (Pooled)

**3.2 Condition factor.** The value of condition factor of *C. carpio* ranged from a minimum of 1.151 in December to the maximum of 1.928 in March, while in case of *S. niger*, the value of condition factor ranged from a minimum of 0.966 in November to the maximum of 1.328 in May. Condition factor values of *C. carpio* var. *communis* were found to be higher as compared to that of *S. niger*.



**Fig 3:** Month wise condition factor in *C. carpio* var. *communis*.



**Fig 4:** Month wise condition factor in *S. niger*

#### 4. Discussion

The length-weight relationship is important for comparing life history of fish from different localities (Petrakis and Stergion, 1995). Length-weight relationships are useful in fisheries research because they allow the conversion of growth-in-length equations to growth-in-weight, biomass estimation, the condition of the fish, differences of life histories of fish species and are useful in population and fish stock assessments (Moutopoulos and Stergiou, 2002) [39]. An overview of literature reveals that the length –weight relationship of fish differs from species to species. Natarajan *et al.* (1977) [40] recorded the difference in the length –weight relationship of intra- specific populations although inhabiting the same water body. The length-weight relationship of fish varies and depends upon the condition of life in aquatic environment (Basheer *et al.*, 1993) [8]. In the present study, the length –weight relationship of both the fishes showed a significant difference although they inhabit the same water body. Several biological factors like sex (Pal *et al.*, 2013) [41], size of fish (Devaraj, 1973) [15] have significant influence over length-weight relationship of fishes. Also the physiological condition and the gonadal maturity (Bashirullah 1975, Le Cren, 1951, Reddy and Rao, 1992) [9, 35, 47] and fatness influence the length-weight relationship of fishes. Length weight relationship is generally established so that time only one of these two parameters is known, the other can be computed easily by substituting the values of co-efficient ‘a’ and ‘b’. Further, values of the exponent ‘b’ provide growth pattern of fish species. When  $b=3$ , increase in weight is isometric i.e., length increases in equal proportions with body weight. When the value of  $b$  is other than 3, weight increase is said to be allometric (positive if  $b>3$  and negative if  $b<3$ ). According to Allen (1938) [3], ideally the regression coefficient ‘b’ of a fish should be very close to 3.0. However, cube law does not hold good throughout the life period and the weight gain in a fish may not be always cube of its length gain (Rounsefell & Everhart 1953; Lagler 1956) [49, 34]. In the present study, lower regression coefficient ( $b<3$ ) were recorded for both the sexes for the two studies indicating of negative allometric growth. Hile (1936) [26] and Martin (1949) [37] suggested that the value of ‘b’ may range between 2.5 and 4.0 and according to Tesch (1971) [57] the value ‘b’ of varies between 2 and 4. Antony (1967) [5] found the value of ‘b’ within a range of 2.0 to 5.4. The ‘b’ value obtained in the present study was within this range. The variation in ‘b’ value may be due to environmental factors, season, food availability, sex, life stage and other physiological factors (Le



Cren, 1951)<sup>[35]</sup>. The present study revealed that the males recorded slightly higher exponential value in *S. niger* as compared to females. Higher values of 'b' in case of males were also reported by Sunder *et al.* (1984)<sup>[56]</sup> and Yousuf *et al.* (2001)<sup>[63]</sup>. While in case of *C. carpio* var. *communis* higher values of 'b' was found in females. Hatikaktoa & Biswas (2004)<sup>[25]</sup> and Rao and Sreeramullu (2006)<sup>[46]</sup> found higher values of 'b' in females, while higher values of 'b' in females were also observed by Kulshrestha *et al.* (1993)<sup>[33]</sup> and Firdous (1995)<sup>[19]</sup>. Qadri and Mir (1983)<sup>[43]</sup> found the value of 'b' to be equal to 2.448 in *Schizothorax richardsonii* of Sindh Nallah while Mir *et al.* (2012)<sup>[38]</sup> calculated different values of 'b' (<3) in case of *Schizothorax curvifrons* in different months from river Jhelum. Shah *et al.* (2013)<sup>[53]</sup> while calculating length-weight relationship of *Oncorhynchus mykiss* observed 'b' value as 2.9618 in the fish. Khan and Sabah (2013)<sup>[30]</sup> calculated 'b' values of 2.69, 2.66, 3.08, 2.64 and 2.86 for *S. curvifrons*, *S. niger*, *S. esocinus*, *S. labiatus* and *S. plagiostomus*, respectively. Bhat *et al.* (2010)<sup>[11]</sup> recorded the values of 'b' for *S. labiatus* (3.0997), *S. esocinus* (3.0034) and *S. plagiostomus* (2.9467) in the Lidder River of Kashmir. Yousuf *et al.* (1992, 2001)<sup>[64, 65]</sup> found 'b' values for *S. niger* of Manasbal Lake, Dal Lake and Anchar Lake as 3.014, 2.977 and 2.974 respectively. Khan and Sabah (2013)<sup>[30]</sup> recorded the value of 'b' equal to 2.66 in *S. niger*. Farooq *et al.* (2017)<sup>[18]</sup> observed 'b' value as 2.578 in *S. labiatus* and found negative allometric growth in the fish. Qadri *et al.* (2017)<sup>[44]</sup> calculated the 'b' value as 2.6138 in *S. curvifrons* While Hussain *et al.* (2018)<sup>[28]</sup> recorded higher 'b' values in males (2.8391) than in case of females (2.6) in snow trout *Schizopyge niger* from Dal Lake. Wali *et al.* (2019)<sup>[60]</sup> recorded 'b' value as 3.028 in *Oncorhynchus mykiss*. Comparing the present values of 'b' in *S. niger* with previous studies, it is evident that the value of 'b' is less. The present low values of 'b' of *S. niger* (2.399) as compared to *C. carpio* var. *communis* (2.615) indicates that *C. carpio* var. *communis* shows better growth as compared to *S. niger*.

#### 4.1 Condition factor

The relative condition factor (Kn) is an indicator of general well-being of the fish (Le Cren, 1951; George *et al.*, 1985)<sup>[35, 22]</sup>. Kn greater than one (1) is indicative of the general well being of fish, whereas its value less than one (1) indicates that fish is not in a good condition. Le Cren (1951)<sup>[35]</sup> correlated the condition factor (K) with the attainment of maturity, feeding intensity and the spawning behavior of a fish. Yousuf and Shafi (2012)<sup>[66]</sup> found that the condition factor of *S. niger* varied seasonally with gonadal development and feeding intensity. Dar *et al.* (2012)<sup>[13]</sup> calculated the relative condition factor (Kn) of *Schizopyge esocinus* from Jhelum River, Kashmir and revealed that the fluctuations in 'Kn' values can be attributed to spawning cycle as well as feeding intensity. Shah *et al.* (2013)<sup>[53]</sup> calculated the ponderal index of rainbow trout (*Oncorhynchus mykiss*) as 1.15 from Dachigam stream in Kashmir. The condition factor is used to compare the condition, fatness or wellbeing of fish (Ahmed *et al.* 2011)<sup>[1]</sup>. It is based on the hypothesis that heavier fish of a particular length are in a better physiological condition (Bagenal, 1978)<sup>[6]</sup>. According to Johnson and Ndimele (2010)<sup>[29]</sup>, condition factor is a useful index for monitoring of feeding intensity, age and growth rates of fish. Anene (2005)<sup>[4]</sup> found that condition factor is strongly influenced by both biotic and abiotic environmental conditions and can be used as an index to assess the status of aquatic ecosystem in which fish live. 'K' remained constant with increase in length and

weight of fish (Salam *et al.* 2005)<sup>[50]</sup>. Low mean Kn value in *Aristichthys nobilis* was attributed to spawning strain, spent condition and low feeding rate (Mahapatra and Datta, 2004)<sup>[36]</sup>. Likewise, Hatikakoty and Biswas (2004)<sup>[25]</sup> suggested increase in the weight of body due to weight of mature gonads. Farooq *et al.* (2017)<sup>[18]</sup> calculated condition factor in *S. labiatus* in males and females as 1.4 and 1.5 respectively and indicated good condition of the fish. In the present study, it was observed that the value of condition factor of *C. carpio* var. *communis* ranged from a minimum of 1.151 (December) to the maximum of 1.928 (March), while in case of *S. niger*, the value of condition factor ranged from a minimum of 0.966 in November to the maximum of 1.32 in March. The highest values of K of both the fishes was obtained in March which may be due to maturity of gonads during spawning. From the present study, it becomes clear that the breeding cycle has a significant effect on the condition factor of the fish. The condition factor of fishes has been reported to be influenced by a number of factors such as onset of maturity (Hoda 1987)<sup>[27]</sup>, spawning (De-Silva and Silva 1979, Al-Daham and Wahab 1991)<sup>[14, 2]</sup>, sex and maturity (Gowda *et al.* 1987, Doddamani and Shanbouge 2001)<sup>[24, 17]</sup> and pollution (Bakhom 1999, Devi *et al.* 2008)<sup>[7, 16]</sup>. During the present study also, the monthly fluctuations in condition factor of the fish seemed to be influenced by gonadal development and availability of food. The value of condition factor of *C. carpio* var. *communis* was found to be higher as compared to *S. niger* indicating better condition of the former than the latter.

#### 5. Conclusion

From the present study, it was concluded that the allometric growth coefficient (b) in *S. niger* was found low as compared to *C. carpio* var. *communis* which indicates poor growth. Condition factor in *S. niger* was also found low as compared to *C. carpio* var. *communis* indicating poor condition of the fish.

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