

ICHTHYOFAUNA OF THE RIVER AKSU OF BALKHASH BASIN

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Being one of the main rivers of Seven Rivers flowing into Lake Balkhash, Aksu River originates in the glaciers of Jungar Alatau. The Major tributary of the Aksu in 20 km downstream is river Sarkand.

The study of fish fauna of the river Aksu began by N. Serov in 1953–58 years. The following studies of species diversity were done by S. Timirhanov and O. Shcherbakov (1999).

The aim of the study was to investigate the current status of fish fauna of the Aksu River and its tributary Sarkand. The studies were conducted in 2011 and 2012. Landing net and fry dragnet 15 m long used for fishing. Long small fishes was fixed in 4% formalin solution, further processing is carried out in the laboratory. Big fishes were examined in the field at once. Morphological and biological analysis was performed according to standards of ichthyological procedure (Pravdin, 1966).

Our results show that a modern fish fauna of the Aksu river is represented by following species of fish: native – Eurasian minnow *Phoxinus phoxinus*, Balkash minnow *Rhynchocypris poljakowii*, spotted thicklip loach *Triplophysa strauchii*, gray loach *T. dorsalis*, Balkash perch *Perca schrenkii*, naked osman *Gymnodiptychus (Diptychus) dybowski*, alien – asp *Aspius aspius*, common carp *Cyprinus carpio*, roach *Rutilus rutilus*, freshwater bream *Abramis brama*, wels catfish *Silurus glanis*, pike perch *Zander lucioperca*, stone moroco *Pseudorasbora parva*, prussian carp *Carassius gibelio*, golden gudgeon *Hypseleotris cinctus*, Chinese false gudgeon *Abbotina rivularis*.

Variety of fish fauna of Sarkand River is also represented by indigenous and alien fish species. There are also Tibet stone loach *Triplophysa stoliczkai*, plain thicklip loach *T. labiata*, Severtsov's loach *T. sewerzowi*. We did not find freshwater bream, asp, roach, perch, wels catfish.

Comparative analysis of the diversity of the Aksu River with data S. Timirhanov and O. Shcherbakov revealed significant changes in 20 years. We have not discovered previously conventional and dominated in different periods Balkhash marinka *Schizothorax argentatus argentatus* and Ili marinka *Schizothorax argentatus pseudaksaiensis*. According to these authors if before marinka remained in the river due to isolation from the mainstream of acclimatized, and now they become rare or even disappeared. As a result of amateur barbarian fishing (Timirhanov, 1999) and changes in the hydrological regime entailed resettlement of alien fish species Balkash perch occurs sporadically. Under current conditions in the fish fauna of the river is dominated by roach, asp and Chinese false gudgeon. In our catches of roach length ranged from 36.4 mm to 111.3 mm (58.4±1.9), asp from 49.6 to 71.6 (58.8±1.8), Chinese false gudgeon from 23.4 to 59.7 (34.2±1.9). The zone of native species decreased significantly. They were found by us near the village Zhansugurov, in areas with a swift current and rocky bottom. In our catches of native fish fauna there are lots of naked osman length, which ranged from 23.3 to 150 mm, 8 mm (60.6±3.2), spotted thicklip loach from 20.4 mm to 78.5 mm (36.7±2.8) and other species in small quantities.

Significant number has now reached the Chinese false gudgeon, which is 20 years ago was totally absent in the fish fauna of the river. The body length of river in our samples Chinese false gudgeon changed from 23.4 mm to 60 mm (34.2±2).

Ichthyofauna of Sarkand River became richer than the earlier data, which was presented only by the naked osman and Tibet stone loach.