

## Ways to merge conservation needs and recreational fisheries in protected areas

Kurt Pinter & Günther Unfer

Institute of Hydrobiology and Aquatic Ecosystem Management, University of Natural Resources and Life Sciences, Vienna, Austria

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### Abstract

By now a great part of Austrian salmonid populations are exposed to management practices that widely disregard natural capacities and dynamics of fish stocks. Waiving factors such as the natural productivity, stock composition and population resilience is a common practice in fisheries management, although it leads to overexploitation and degeneration of native populations. The frequently applied compensatory measure of stocking hatchery reared fish is mostly insufficient and a further cause for loss of vitality of wildlife stocks.

Recreational angling in protected areas is a widely controversially discussed issue. However, the combination of conservation and recreational needs is not necessarily exclusive. This can be seen and has been proven by a series of successful management concepts in national parks e.g. in the United States of America. Surplus values like the rising awareness for conservation demands are evident. Moreover, the possibility for conservation areas to fulfill advisory services in educating the society in sustainable use of natural resources can be perceived as a chance to set good examples. In other words, conservation areas stride ahead applying best practice.

There is common sense among fisheries scientists and ecologists that running waters in protected areas have to be managed with explicit cautiousness. Rigorous regulations have to be applied that are based on considerations reflecting current knowledge in sustainable fisheries management. Stocking of fish, for example, has to be abandoned or adequately applied. Catch/size limits need to be ascribed to the dynamics of the closely monitored fish population and fish population censuses need to result in the formulation of ever evolving management plans.

### Contact

Kurt Pinter

[kurt.pinter@boku.ac.at](mailto:kurt.pinter@boku.ac.at)

(+43)1/47654 - 5235

Institute of Hydrobiology and Aquatic Ecosystem Management

Max-Emanuelstrasse 17

1180 Vienna

Austria

