

# The effect of attractiveness of fish on people's willingness to protect them

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## *Abstract*

Currently, the constant degradation of biodiversity and the effort to protect it represent one of the most urgent and often discussed problems related to survival on Earth. Due to people's reluctance or indifference, many organisms, including fish, are now at risk of extinction. Compared to the popularity of vertebrates, such as mammals or birds, fish tend to cause aversion in people, which can be a significant obstacle to their protection. So far, however, there are no studies dealing with the characteristics determining the perception of the attractiveness of fish. Lack of knowledge and people's present difficulties, even in the protection of endangered species. Therefore, we experimentally investigated the influence of the attractiveness of fish on people's willingness to protect them, the perception of fear of fish among men and women, and whether people's fear caused by individual species of fish is related to the perception of their attractiveness. According to the results of our research, respondents tended to protect fish they considered more attractive than fish they perceived less attractive. We also found out that fear was important factor that significantly influenced the perception of the attractiveness of some fish species. Respondents showed greater fear of those fish species they rated as less attractive. Moreover, men were generally less afraid of fish than women. As part of the protection of biodiversity, it is important to focus not only on commonly known fish such as trout or carp but also on diverse species, their identification, recognition, and protection already at school age. Subsequently, attractive fish species can be included among the flagship species and thus provide the necessary information to the wider public.

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## *Keywords*

attractiveness, fish, fear, protection, biodiversity, flagship species