



S.I.E.F.
Società Italiana
Ecopatologia
della Fauna

ATTI DEL

**IV CONGRESSO NAZIONALE DI
ECOPATOLOGIA DELLA FAUNA**

Domodossola
11-13 Ottobre 2017

Atti del IV Congresso Nazionale di Ecopatologia della Fauna

Organizzato da: S.I.E.F. – Società Italiana di Ecopatologia della Fauna

Fondata nel 1992

www.sief.it

Edizione a cura di:

Stancampiano L.; Armaroli E.; Viganò R.; Ferrari N.

Publicazione elettronica scaricabile dal sito www.sief.it

A cura di: S.I.E.F. - Società Italiana di Ecopatologia della Fauna

Dicembre 2017

ISBN on line: 9788894297300

Direttivo SIEF:

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HISTEROMORPHA TRILOBA (DIGENEA: DIPLOSTOMIDAE) REPORTED IN CYPRINIDS
OF LIGURIAN INLAND WATERS

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Hysteromorpha triloba (Digenea: Diplostomidae) is a parasite that affect fish muscle. This fluke is characterised by a complex life cycle, which include a snail (Genus *Gyraulus*) as first intermediate host, a fish (Ictalurids or Cyprinids) as second intermediate host and birds (Cormorants) as definitive hosts. It has been described in Europe and America; in Italy, the metacercariae stage has been found in wild chub (*Squalius cephalus*) caught in Emilia-Romagna watercourses and in catfish (*Ameiurus melas*) reared in a farm placed in Modena, while the adult stage of the parasite was found in Eurasian bittern (*Botaurus stellaris*). Thus, during spring 2015 a study has been carried out by the Liguria region in collaboration with the Fish Diseases Laboratory of the Istituto Zooprofilattico Sperimentale del Piemonte, Liguria e Valle d'Aosta to better understand the native range of *H. triloba* and to establish the health status of fish settled in Ligurian inland waters. In total 93 Cyprinids were sampled, in particular 46 Italian riffle dace (*Teslestes muticellus*), 25 Italian barbel (*Barbus plebejus*) and 22 chubs (*Squalius cephalus*) caught in various Ligurian streams. All samples were submitted to internal and external parasitological exam, with particular focus on the muscle to detect digenean metacercariae. *H. triloba* metacercariae are clearly visible since they are characterized by a white colour and they measure 1-2 mm in diameter. Each found parasite was analysed with the microscope to define morphological characters and fixed in 70% alcohol. Metacercariae were found in 10 fish (10,7%), especially in only one Italian barbel (4%) and in 9 chubs (40,9%). Parasites were identified as *H. triloba* through morphology characterisation. All positive fish were found with numerous parasite in the muscle. Despite the fact that this parasite doesn't affect humans, it is a problem from a market point of view since they appear repugnant and impossible to sell. Nowadays dates about *H. trilobata* prevalence and distribution in Italy are limited, so the current study provides new information about how this fluke affect the Italian fish fauna. However more data are necessary, in particular in the other Italian region in order to better understand *H. triloba* real distribution.