
# ICHTHYOMETRIC METHODS AND WEIGHT–LENGTH RELATIONSHIPS FOR ASSESSING THE GROWTH DYNAMICS OF SILVER CARP (HYPOPHTHALMICHTHYS MOLITRIX VALENCIENNES, 1844): A REVIEW

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**https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.21901888**

**ARTICLE INFO**

Received: 07th August 2026
Accepted: 09th August 2026
Online: 11th August 2026

**KEYWORDS**

*silver carp, Hypophthalmichthys molitrix, ichthyometry, weight–length relationship, allometric growth, Fulton's condition factor, growth dynamics, aquaculture*

**ABSTRACT**

*This review summarizes the scientific principles of ichthyometric methods and weight–length relationships used to assess the growth dynamics of silver carp (Hypophthalmichthys molitrix Valenciennes, 1844). The biological significance of morphometric parameters, including body length, body weight, Fulton's condition factor, weight–length regression, and allometric growth models, is discussed in relation to fish growth and physiological condition. Particular attention is given to the application of these methods in broodstock selection, selective breeding, and growth evaluation under pond aquaculture conditions. The reviewed literature indicates that integrated morphometric analysis provides a reliable scientific basis for evaluating growth performance, optimizing feeding strategies, and improving broodstock management in aquaculture.*

**Introduction:** The rapid development of global aquaculture has increased the need for scientifically reliable methods to evaluate fish growth, biological performance, and production efficiency. According to the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO, 2024), aquaculture currently accounts for more than half of the fish consumed worldwide, highlighting its essential role in ensuring food security and supporting sustainable fisheries. Consequently, accurate assessment of fish growth has become one of the fundamental objectives of fisheries biology and aquaculture research. Among freshwater aquaculture species, silver carp (*Hypophthalmichthys molitrix* Valenciennes, 1844) is recognized as one of the most economically important filter-feeding fish because of its rapid growth, efficient utilization of natural food resources, high adaptability to diverse environmental conditions, and considerable ecological value. In addition to its commercial importance, silver carp contributes significantly to improving water quality through the consumption of phytoplankton, thereby enhancing the ecological stability of pond ecosystems. Owing to these characteristics, the species has become one of the principal components of polyculture systems in many countries, including Uzbekistan. Evaluation of fish growth is based primarily

on quantitative biological indicators reflecting morphological development and physiological condition. Among the most widely used approaches, **ichthyometric analysis** and **weight–length relationship models** have become internationally accepted methods for assessing growth dynamics. Ichthyometric measurements, including total length, standard length, body weight, body depth, and head dimensions, provide essential information regarding somatic growth and body proportions. These parameters are widely used to compare fish populations, evaluate environmental adaptation, and determine the biological quality of broodstock. The relationship between body length and body weight represents one of the most important tools in fisheries biology. The classical equation $\mathbf{W = aL^b}$ has been extensively applied to characterize growth patterns in fish populations. According to Ricker (1975) and Froese (2006), the allometric coefficient (**b**) provides valuable information regarding growth characteristics. When **b = 3**, fish exhibit isometric growth, whereas values **greater than 3** indicate positive allometric growth and values **less than 3** indicate negative allometric growth. These models are widely employed to evaluate growth performance, nutritional status, habitat suitability, and environmental adaptation under both natural and cultured conditions. Another important biological indicator is **Fulton's condition factor (K)**, which reflects the physiological condition, nutritional status, and energy reserves of fish. Higher condition factor values generally indicate favorable environmental conditions, adequate feeding, and good health status. Combined with weight–length analysis, Fulton's condition factor has become a standard criterion for assessing fish well-being and production potential in aquaculture. Numerous studies have demonstrated the scientific value of morphometric analyses in fish biology. Huet (1970) emphasized that fish growth is strongly influenced by water temperature, dissolved oxygen concentration, and food availability. Bardach et al. (1972) reported that body weight and body length are reliable indicators of biological productivity and should be considered during broodstock selection. Hickling (1974) demonstrated that growth intensity depends largely on age, nutritional conditions, and environmental quality. Later, Jobling (1994) highlighted the importance of energy allocation in determining fish growth, while Froese (2006) recommended standardized weight–length relationships as an essential component of fisheries assessments and stock evaluation.

Recent advances in fisheries science have expanded the application of ichthyometric techniques by integrating traditional morphometric measurements with statistical modeling, allometric analysis, condition indices, and digital image processing. These approaches have significantly improved the accuracy of growth assessment and have become valuable tools for selective breeding, broodstock evaluation, stock management, and aquaculture production.

Despite the widespread use of these methods internationally, comprehensive evaluations of growth dynamics based on integrated ichthyometric measurements and weight–length relationships for silver carp cultured under pond aquaculture conditions remain limited in Uzbekistan. Most available studies focus primarily on production performance, whereas relatively little attention has been given to the combined assessment of morphometric characteristics, allometric growth patterns, and physiological condition. Therefore, this review aims to summarize current scientific knowledge regarding ichthyometric methods and weight–length relationships used for assessing the growth dynamics of silver carp (*Hypophthalmichthys molitrix* Valenciennes, 1844), and to highlight

their importance for growth evaluation, broodstock selection, selective breeding, and sustainable pond aquaculture management.

**Materials and Methods:** This review is based on a comprehensive analysis of scientific publications concerning growth assessment methods in silver carp. Scientific articles, books, review papers, and technical reports published between 1970 and 2025 **were retrieved from** Scopus, Web of Science, ScienceDirect, SpringerLink, Google Scholar**, and the** Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) **database.**

The reviewed studies focused on the application of the following biological indicators:

- Total length (TL, cm);
- Standard length (SL, cm);
- Body weight (W, g or kg);
- Fulton's condition factor (K);
- Weight–length relationship;
- Allometric growth coefficient (b);
- Coefficient of determination ($R^2$).

The weight–length relationship was described using the classical equation:

$\mathbf{W = aL^b}$ where **W** is body weight (g), **L** is body length (cm), **a** is the regression intercept, and **b** is the allometric growth coefficient.

Fulton's condition factor was calculated as:

$\mathbf{K = (W \times 100) / L^3}$ Statistical analyses reported in the reviewed studies were generally performed using **Microsoft Excel**, **SPSS**, **Statistica**, or **R** software. Mean values were expressed as **M ± SE**, while Pearson's correlation analysis, Student's *t*-test, and one-way ANOVA were commonly applied to evaluate relationships among biological variables.

**Results and Discussion:** The reviewed literature demonstrates that ichthyometric analysis is one of the most effective approaches for evaluating growth dynamics in silver carp. Continuous measurements of body length and body weight allow researchers to determine growth performance throughout different developmental stages. Huet (1970) reported that body length is closely associated with age, feeding conditions, and environmental factors. Similarly, Bardach et al. (1972) concluded that body weight reflects both muscle development and energy storage, making it an important indicator of biological productivity. The weight–length relationship has become a fundamental tool in fisheries biology. Froese (2006) suggested that the allometric coefficient (**b**) can be used to characterize growth patterns:

- **b = 3** indicates isometric growth;
- **b > 3** indicates positive allometric growth;
- **b < 3** indicates negative allometric growth.

According to Jobling (1994), silver carp cultured under favorable nutritional conditions generally exhibit **b-values between 3.0 and 3.3**, indicating that body weight increases proportionally faster than body length. Fulton's condition factor is another important biological indicator reflecting nutritional status, physiological condition, and environmental suitability. Values exceeding **1.2** generally indicate good body condition and adequate feeding. Most published studies have reported a strong positive correlation (**r = 0.90–0.98**) between body length and body weight in silver carp. Such relationships demonstrate that morphometric measurements can reliably predict fish growth and biological performance.

Modern aquaculture increasingly combines ichthyometric measurements with weight–length regression, condition indices, and allometric growth analysis to improve broodstock selection, evaluate feeding efficiency, and optimize fish production under intensive pond farming conditions.

Conclusion: The reviewed literature confirms that ichthyometric measurements and weight–length relationships represent reliable scientific tools for assessing the growth dynamics of silver carp (*Hypophthalmichthys molitrix*). Body length, body weight, Fulton's condition factor, and allometric growth parameters provide comprehensive information regarding fish physiological condition, growth performance, and biological productivity. Weight–length regression and correlation analyses are valuable for identifying high-quality broodstock and improving selective breeding programs. Their application under pond aquaculture conditions contributes to optimizing feeding strategies, improving broodstock management, and increasing production efficiency. Future studies integrating morphometric measurements with hydrochemical parameters, nutritional factors, genetic markers, and reproductive traits will further enhance scientific understanding of silver carp growth and support sustainable aquaculture development.

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