

SURF CASTING AS A TOURIST ATTRACTION ON THE COAST OF THE POMERANIAN BAY, POLAND

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Summary

Angling has a long tradition in Poland, and over the years it has become both a tourist attraction and a form of recreation. Beach angling, also known as surf casting, is one type of recreational fishing. Until recently, surf casting was practiced primarily by residents of seaside communities, and sometimes by tourists vacationing at the seaside, but it is currently becoming increasingly popular in Poland.

The current study focused primarily on identifying the potential benefits stemming from beach angling tourism. A group of 49 people who were surf casting near Międzyzdroje in November 2010 were surveyed. The research tool used was a questionnaire.

The results of the survey indicated that recreational fishers are a highly mobile group willing to travel hundreds of kilometers to be able to fish. Surf casters are especially fond of angling far away from large urban agglomerations and outside of the summer season. This group of tourists is also willing to pay relatively high costs for accommodation and food, which are expenses not directly linked to the costs of fishing or gear. Tourists who spend money on accommodation and food help support coastal communities. Angling tourism can also help in the development of small, coastal villages in which the tourist season lasts only a few months each year.

Keywords

Surf casting, pomeranian bay, angling, touristic

INTRODUCTION

Angling is an amateur form of fishing that employs fishing rods. The Polish coastal zone of the Baltic Sea is a fine place for angling from boats as well as from the beach. The coastal waters of the southern Baltic Sea offer opportunities for anglers to catch marine (e.g., cod, flounder, garfish), diadromous (e.g., salmon, sea trout, eel), and freshwater fish (e.g., bream, perch) (Andrulewicz et al. 2008, Bartel 2002, Brylińska 2000).

The coastline of western Pomerania, with its wide sandy beaches and wide variety of tourist services, is a very popular region for vacationers in the summer. The largest coastal cities in West Pomeranian Voivodeship – Świnoujście and Międzyzdroje, are both classified as spas (Kosacki and Kucharski 2001). Numerous newly-established rehabilitation facilities and spas are in operation in each of these cities, which permits them to prosper year round. However, not all localities on the Pomeranian coast are able to function outside of the traditional summer tourist season. By September, the majority of these small towns and villages have been deserted by tourists, who provide the primary source of income to 80% of the residents in these localities (www.wolinwn.pl). One alternative for many coastal towns and villages in West Pomeranian Voivodeship might be another branch of tourism – angling tourism. The aim of the current study was to identify potential benefits that would stem from tourism generated by surf casting.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The survey was conducted on November 19-21, 2010 during a marine angler rally called Salmo Saltus 2010, which was held at the Grodno 2 Resort (Fig. 1). The participants fished from the beach of the Woliński National Park.

A total of 49 anglers who fished from the beach using primarily spinning reels and flies participated in the survey which comprised completing an anonymous questionnaire. The results were analyzed to identify the origin, age, and angling preferences of the respondents.



Fig. 1. Western Pomeranian coast. Fishing location is indicated with an arrow. Source www.googlemaps.com

RESULTS

The survey was conducted among a group of 49 men. The highest percentage of respondents originated from West Pomeranian Voivodeship (32%), but participants also originated from voivodeships several hundred miles away such as Lublin or Świętokrzyskie, as well as from abroad in Germany (Table 1).

Table 1. Origin of respondents participating in the angling competition *Salmo Saltus* 2010

Region	%
Poland – West Pomeranian Voivodeship	32
Poland – Pomeranian Voivodeship	22
Poland – Masovian Voivodeship	12
Poland – Greater Poland Voivodeship	10
Poland – Lesser Poland Voivodeship	9
Poland – Lower Silesian Voivodeship	4
Poland – Warmian-Masurian Voivodeship	4
Poland – Lublin Voivodeship	2
Poland – Świętokrzyskie Voivodeship	2
Germany - Hamburg	2

This indicated that anglers are a group of tourists that are willing to travel great distances and incur substantial financial costs for fishing opportunities.

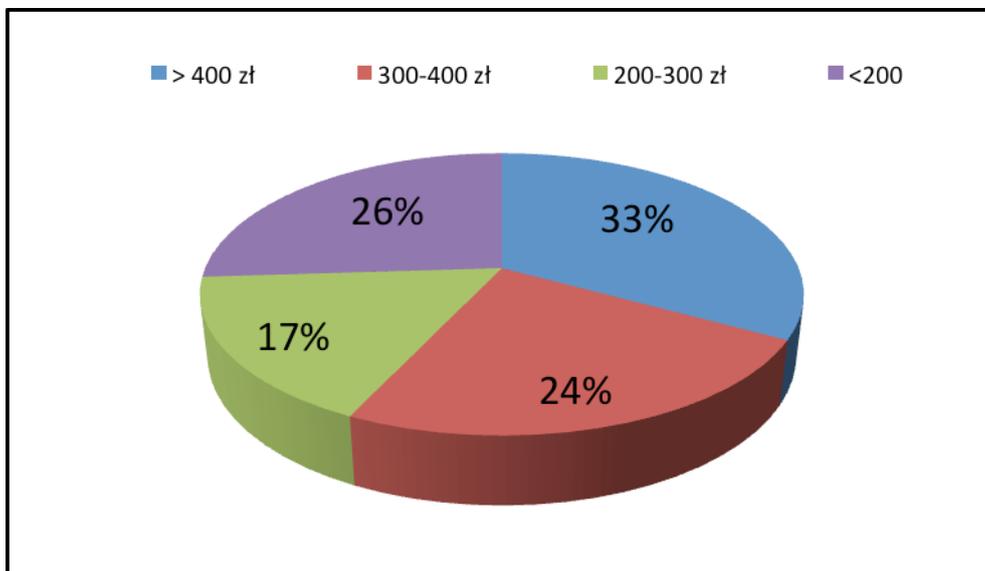


Fig. 2. Cost of trip for recreational beach angling

This was also confirmed by the fact that anglers declared they reserved relatively large sums of money for fishing trips, with 33% of respondents allocating more than 400 pln for such a trip and a subsequent 24% of anglers declaring that they spent between 300 to 400 pln for each trip (Fig. 2).

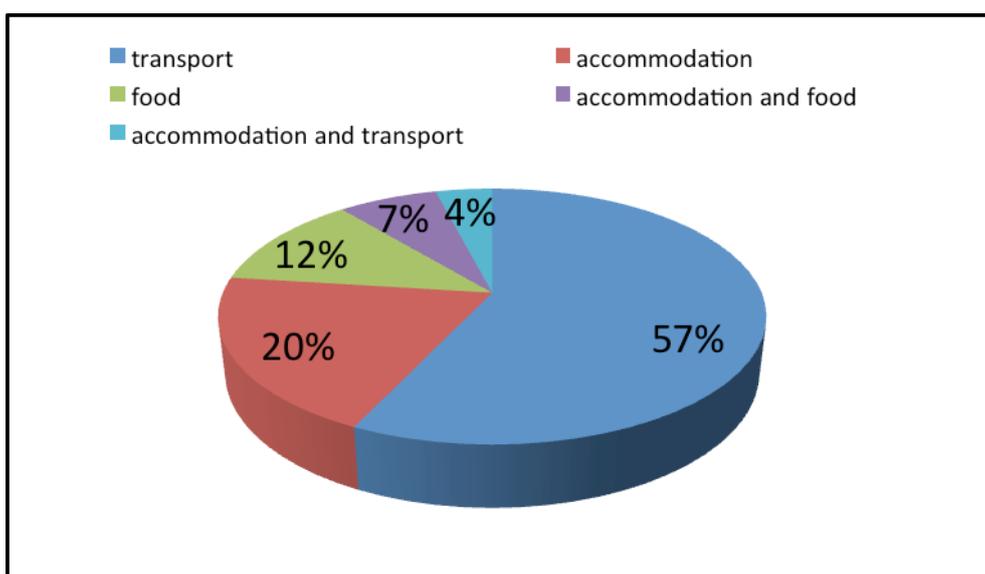


Fig. 3. Main expense categories anglers declared for beach angling trips

The greatest expense of angling trips was transport at (57 %), with about 40% budgeted for accommodation and food, and thus the profit from these expenses provided income for local businesses offering these services (Fig. 3).

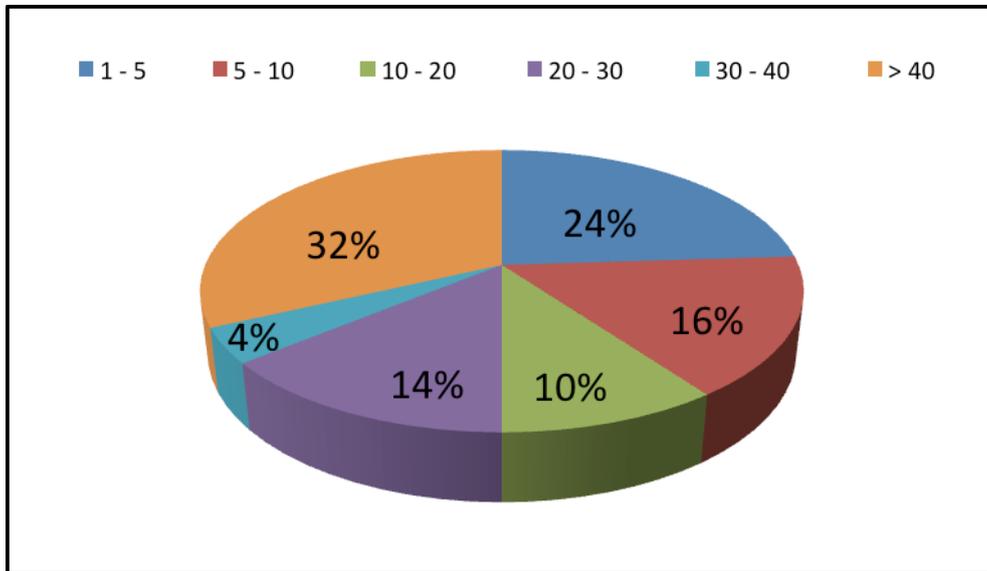


Fig. 4. Frequency of angling trips annually

Considering the frequency of angling trips, with 56% of respondents declaring they made in excess of 30 such trips annually (Fig. 4), the potential profits for small coastal communities from this particular category of tourist are significant.

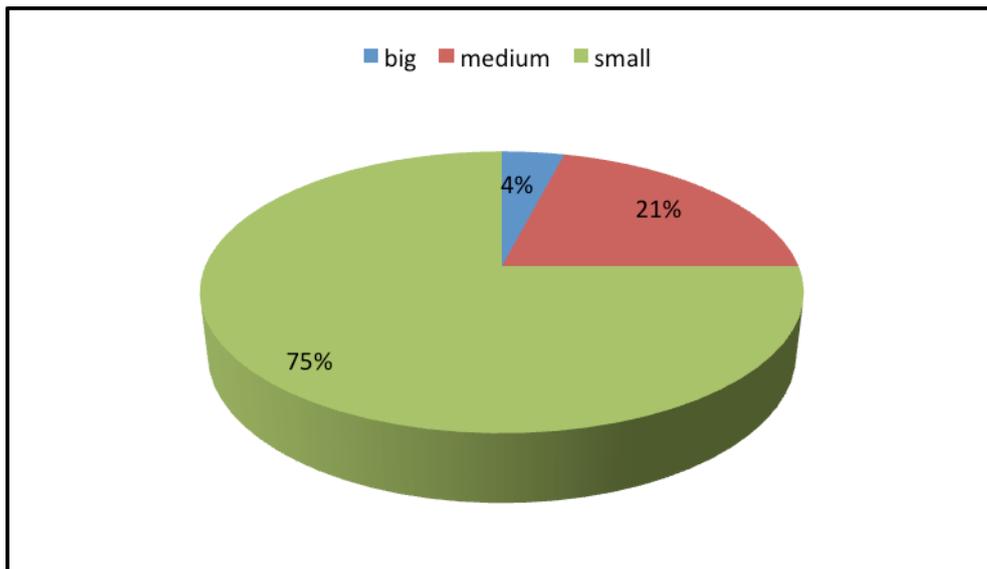


Fig. 5. Preferred size of coastal localities used as bases for beach angling trips

The majority of respondents reported to prefer small localities for beach angling (75%; Fig. 5). Respondents also expressed preferences for small localities for accommodation (71%) and food services (91%; Figs. 6 and 7).

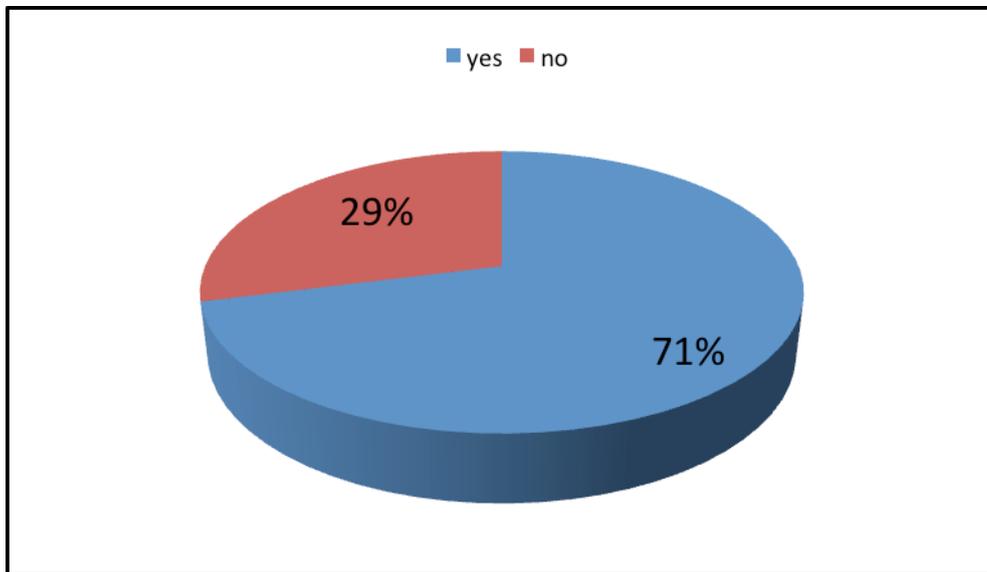


Fig. 6. Accommodation used by respondents during beach angling trips

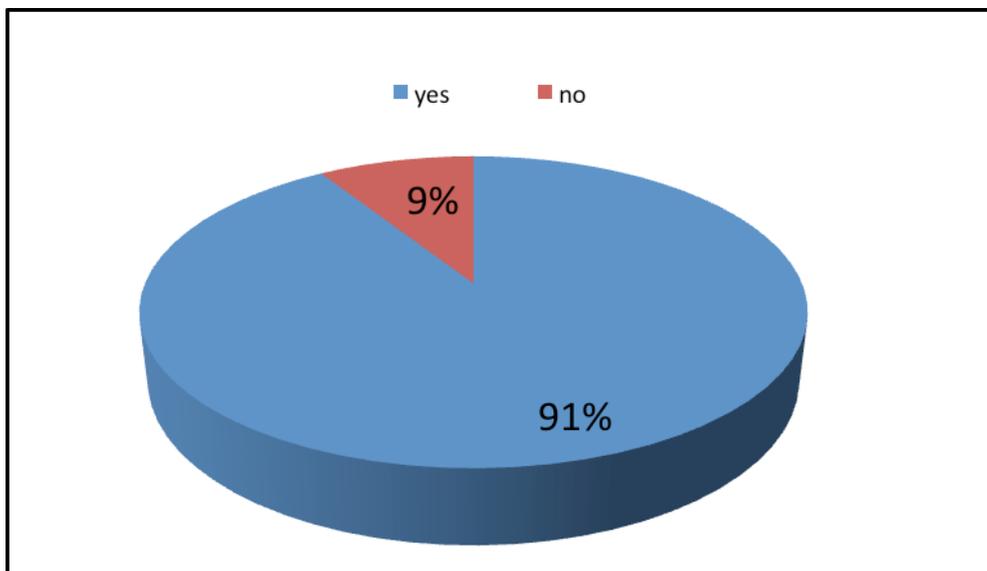


Fig. 7. Food services patronized by respondents during beach angling trips

The requirements of respondents regarding living conditions were quite modest, and as many as 79% of respondents preferred renting rooms in private homes (37%) or in pension (42%; Fig. 8). Similarly, most respondents frequented bars with food service (53%).

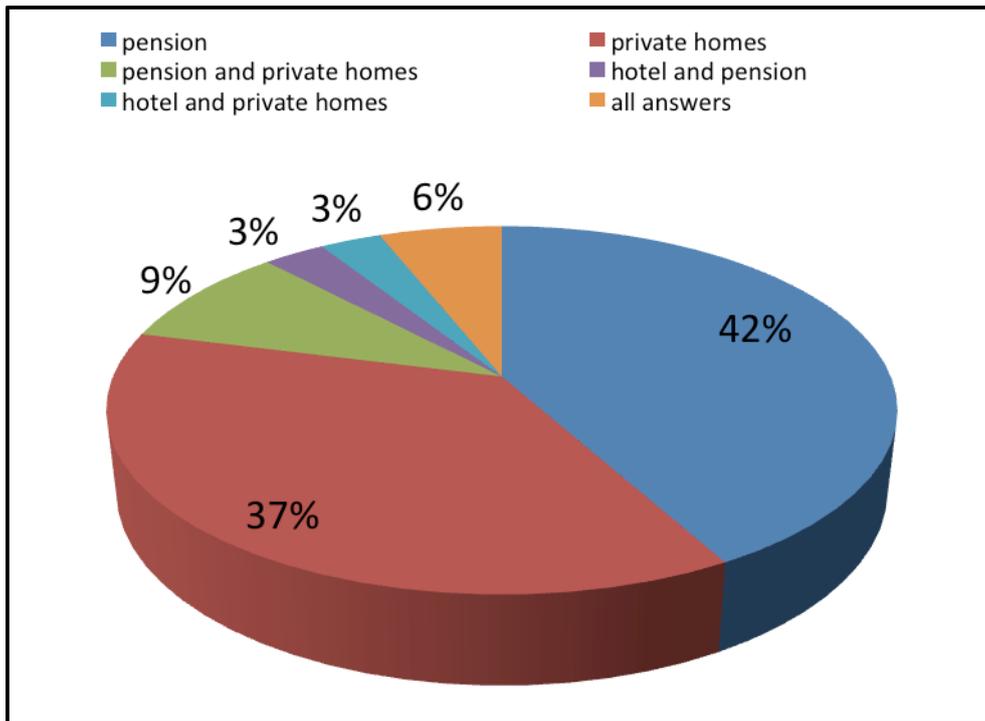


Fig. 8. Preferred accommodation during beach angling trips

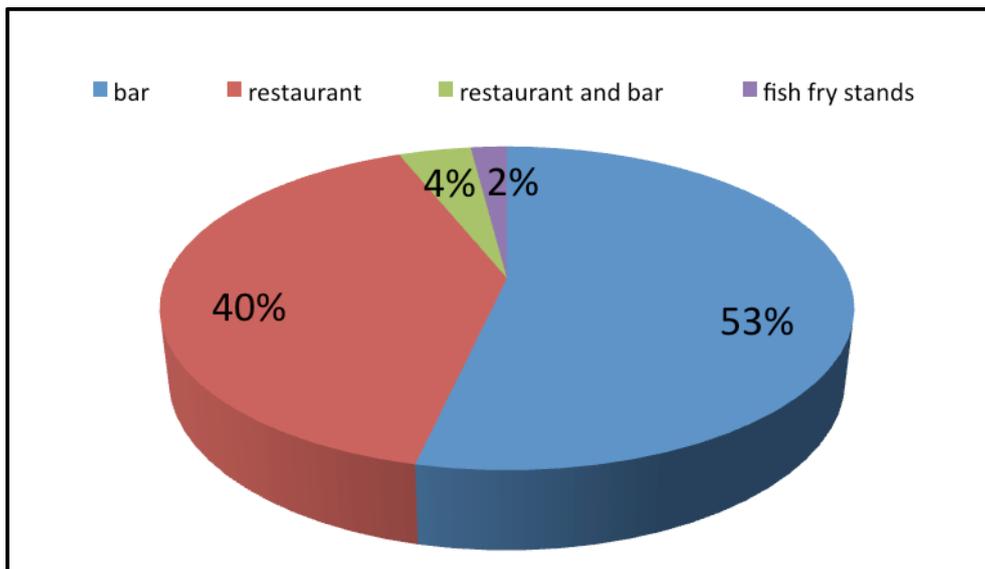


Fig. 9. Preferred food establishments during beach angling trips

A very small percentage of anglers dined at fish fry stands (2%), but this could have been because most of these establishments are closed in the off season (Fig. 9).

According to the respondents, fishing from beaches in small coastal communities is financially beneficial for local inhabitants (39%) and helps such communities develop outside of the summer season (35%; Fig. 10).

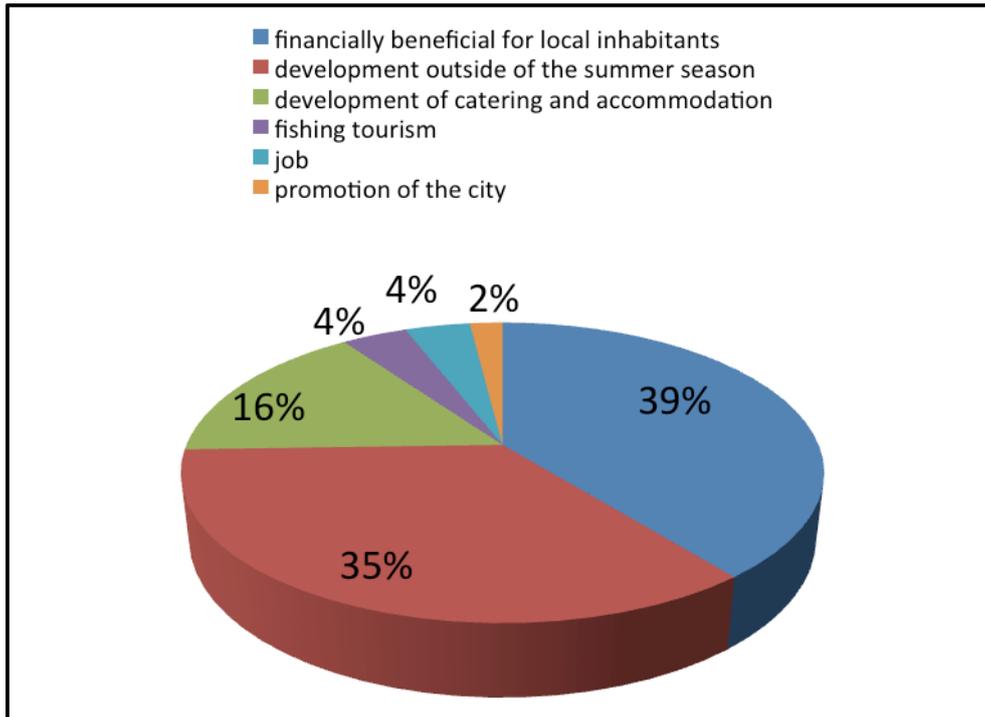


Fig. 10. Opinion of respondents regarding the benefits stemming from the development of angling tourism in small coastal communities

DISCUSSION

The history of angling stretches back to ancient times. Egyptian murals depicting figures fishing date to 1300-1200 years BCE. In Poland, many archeological digs near Biskupina have unearthed fishing hooks that date to the sixth century BCE. Initially, angling was simply a way to acquire food, but by the twentieth century it had become a recreational activity and, in some instances, a sport. In the USA, 28 million people angled in 1965, 33 million in 1970, and 50 million in 2002, and similar increases have also been noted in Europe (Szczerbowski 2008).

In addition to traditional inland angling, marine angling is also growing in popularity annually. Those interested in marine angling include experienced inland anglers drawn by the sea as well as vacationers seeking additional recreational activities at the seaside.

Fishing trips are expensive since they often involve traveling to good fishing locations that can be relatively far away. Surveys conducted by the Polish Angling Association on a group of 2,998 respondents indicated that 75% of them do not participate in fishing trips outside of Poland (www.pzw.org.pl). The decided majority of participants in the Salmo Saltus angling rally in Grodno came from the West Pomeranian Voivodeship; however, there were also participants from distant areas of Poland and from Germany. The anglers who responded to the questionnaire during the Salmo Saltus rally reported that the greatest expense they incurred during fishing trips was for transportation to the coast. According to surveys conducted by the Polish Angling Association among 9,477 respondents, anglers prefer to travel with friends (37%). The fewest number of respondents reported traveling with distant (5%; www.pzw.org.pl). The data gathered at the Salmo Saltus 2010 angling rally indicate that the men attending such events do so most willingly by themselves.

In the 1970s, anglers were estimated to fish more than 61 days per year (Wołos 1994). Although in comparison with other activities, angling tourism is time consuming and requires patience, interest in it is continually growing. Currently, angling intensity and frequency are estimated to fluctuate from several to 250 times per year at an estimated average of between 14 and 44 times annually (Szczerbowski 2008). The survey of anglers conducted during the Salmo Saltus rally indicated that most of them participated in beach angling approximately twenty to thirty times annually. According to Arra et al. (2001), beach angling is enjoying increasing interest each year. This fishing discipline is known as surf casting, which describes the technique of casting one's rod into the surf from the beach. Anglers who fish from the shore usually wear special waders and often wade several meters into the surf. These fishers prefer to fish in the evenings and outside of the summer season. During summer days seaside beaches are very crowded, and beach angling poses a threat to swimmers in the sea (Burgess 2008). The Salmo Saltus angling rally in Grodno was held in November when the beaches were deserted. The participants were able to take over a large section of the beach without interfering with tourists who were sunbathing or swimming. According to Ristori (2008), the type of coastline and the

beach are the decisive factors in choosing a place to surf cast. Most of the respondents who participated in the survey at Grodno preferred the beaches of small coastal communities. The coastline in the West Pomeranian Voivodeship in the vicinity of Wolin Island comprises wide, sandy beaches with very gently sloping bottoms. The Grodno 2 Resort is located between Międzyzdroje and Międzywodzie, where the beach is narrow and stony (Kolendowicz and Owcarz 2007).

The anglers who responded to the survey and participated in the Salmo Saltus beach angling rally from November 19-21 confirmed during conversations that fishing is, above all else, a passion. The participants in Salmo Saltus were fishers with many years of experience. On the opinion of the anglers interviewed, beach angling in November will help support smaller coastal communities outside of the summer season. Proof of can be found in the fact that during their stay in Grodno, the anglers also visited nearby Międzyzdroje. The respondents patronized both accommodation and food establishments. Small coastal communities do not attract tourists outside of the summer season. Organizing angling events is thus a chance for tourism to operate throughout the year, and angling tourism could provide a year-round income to the residents of small coastal localities.

Angling tourism could become a source of year-round income for residents of small coastal communities. Exploiting fisheries resources to promote villages could lead to their development. In countries such as Sweden or Norway, recreational fisheries have already become a profitable branch of tourism. In 1995 in the United States, 4.5 million recreational fishers caught 450,000 tons of marine fish. These fishers spent 488 million dollars, and this figure is increasing annually. It is estimated that each sport angler spent 185 USD, which is nearly 0.6 of the net national product (Russek 1995). Many authors (Russek 1995, Sikora 1997, Arra 2001, Burgess 2008, Kolendowicz and Owcarz 2007) believe that in addition to the profit generated by recreational and sport fishing for services and businesses, above all else, fishing is a very satisfying active way of spending free time in the fresh air. Sport and recreational fishing provide an opportunity for the overworked and stressed to relax

in the great outdoors, while also contributing, at least in the case of Poland, to the development of small coastal communities outside of the summer season.

CONCLUSIONS

1. Sport and recreational angling is becoming increasingly popular each year in Poland.

2. Angling from sea beaches is potentially a year-round tourist attraction for both experienced and amateur anglers.

3. Angling tourism could spur development in smaller coastal communities outside of the summer season.

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