

Deformations of the spinal column in Atlantic salmon

Per Gunnar Fjelldal, Robin Ørnsrud, Olav Breck,
Anna Wargelius, Arne Berg, Kevin Glover, Ane
Grini, Roar Sandvik, Rune Waagbø, Tom Hansen

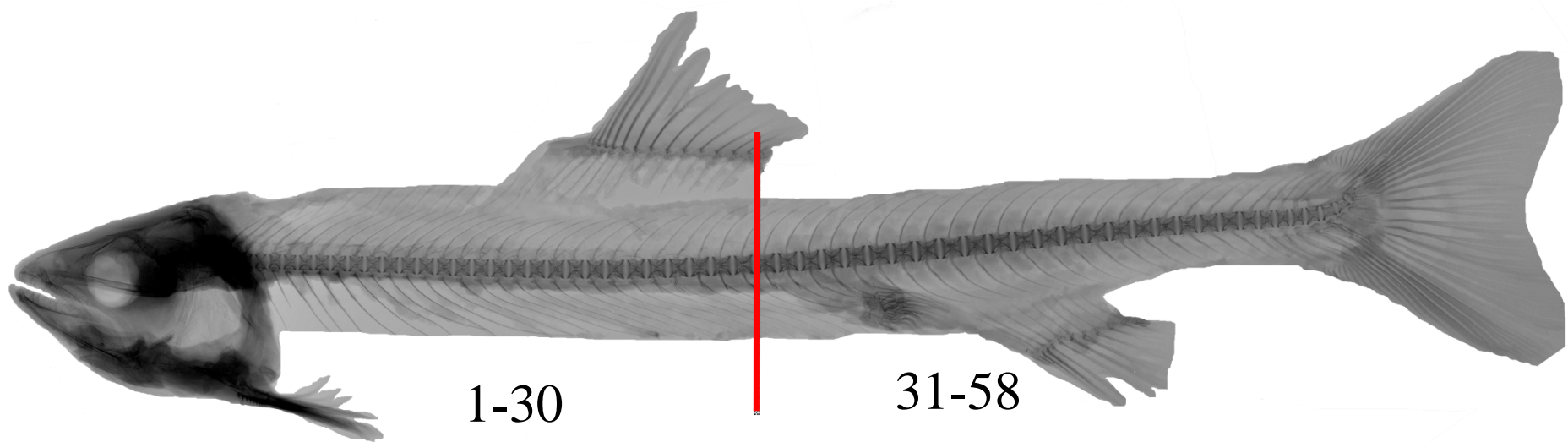
IMR, NIFES, Marine Harvest, Skretting.

Overview

- General anatomy
- Different deformities
- Factors - deformities:
 - Diet
 - Temperature
 - Breeding
 - Vaccination
- Implications for fish welfare - growth

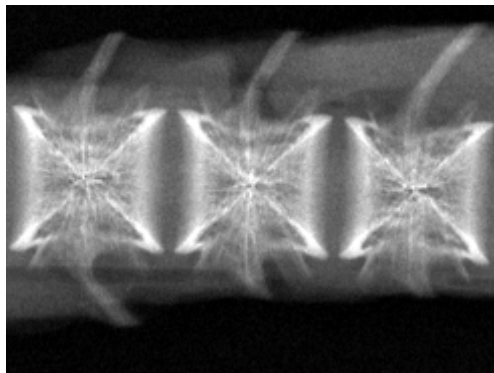
The vertebral column

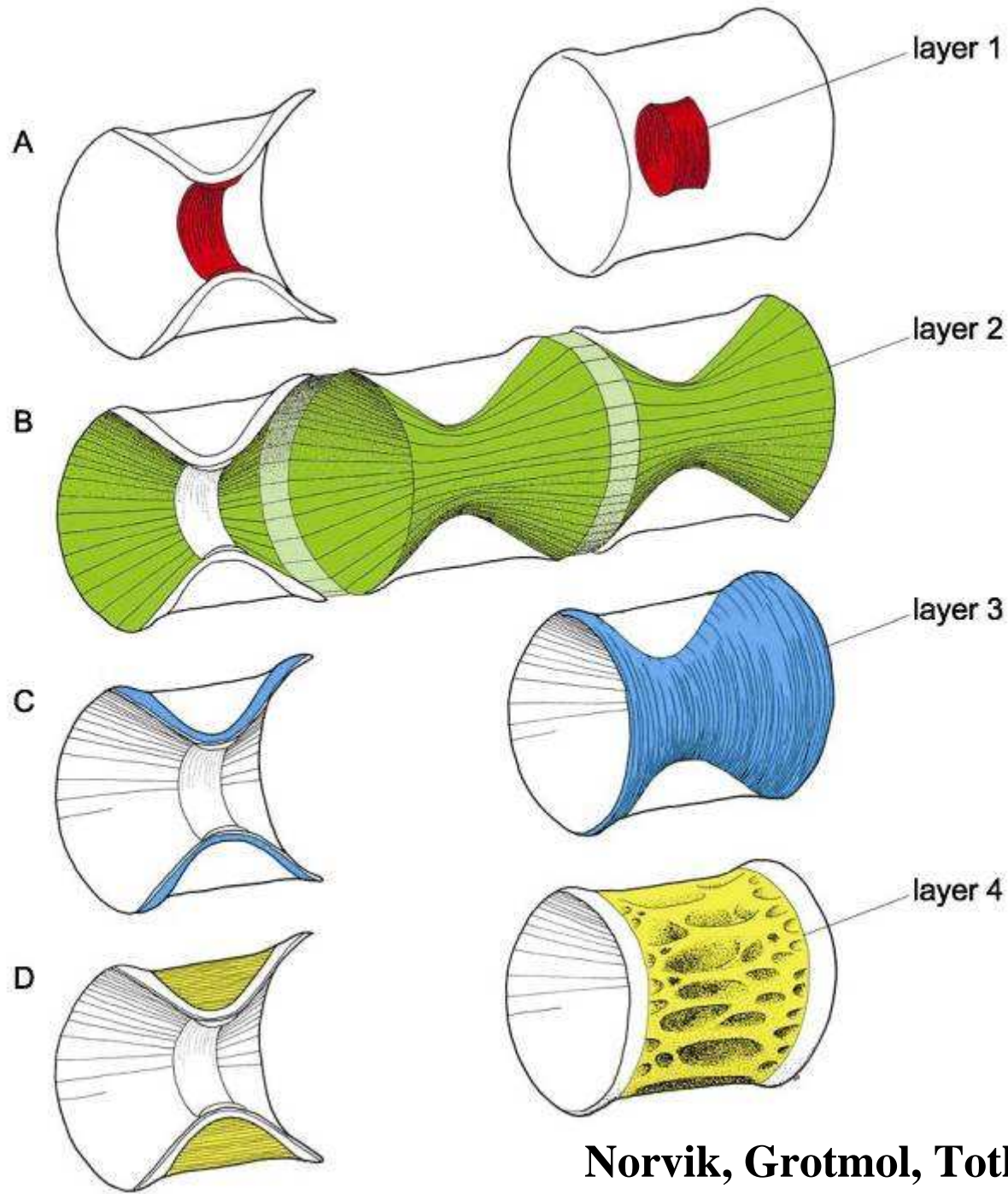
- 58 (56-60) vertebrae.
- Vertebrae 1-30 are trunkal, while vertebrae 31-58 are caudal.



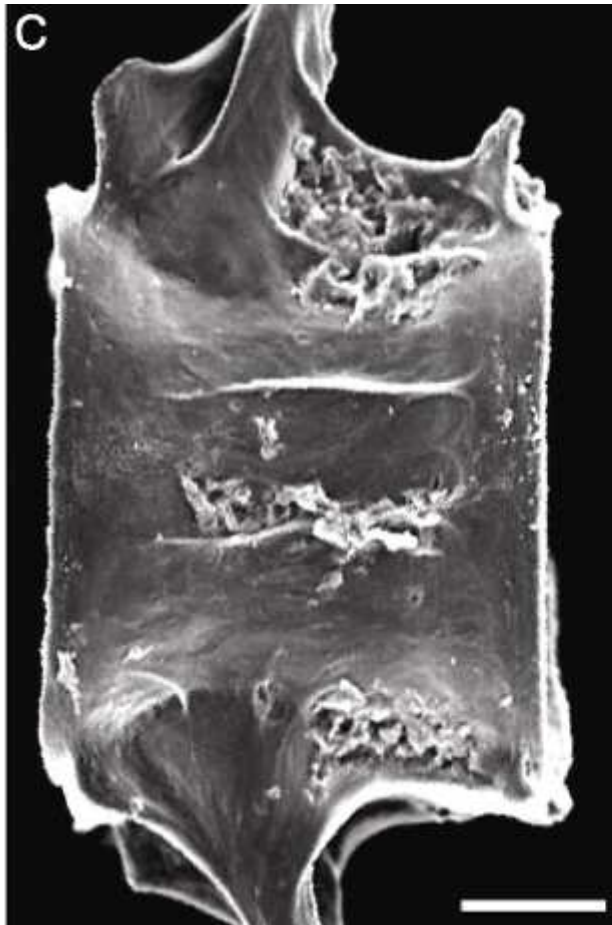
The vertebrae

- Low bone mass to reduce negative buoyancy.
- Comprised of 4 layers of bone.
- Biconoide core of compact bone surrounded by trabecular bone.
- Separated by notochordal tissue.

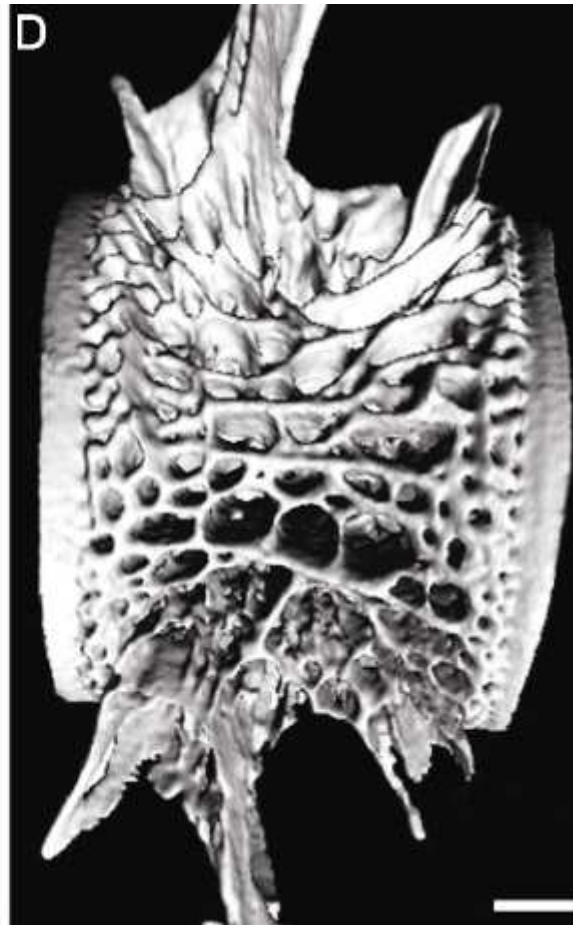




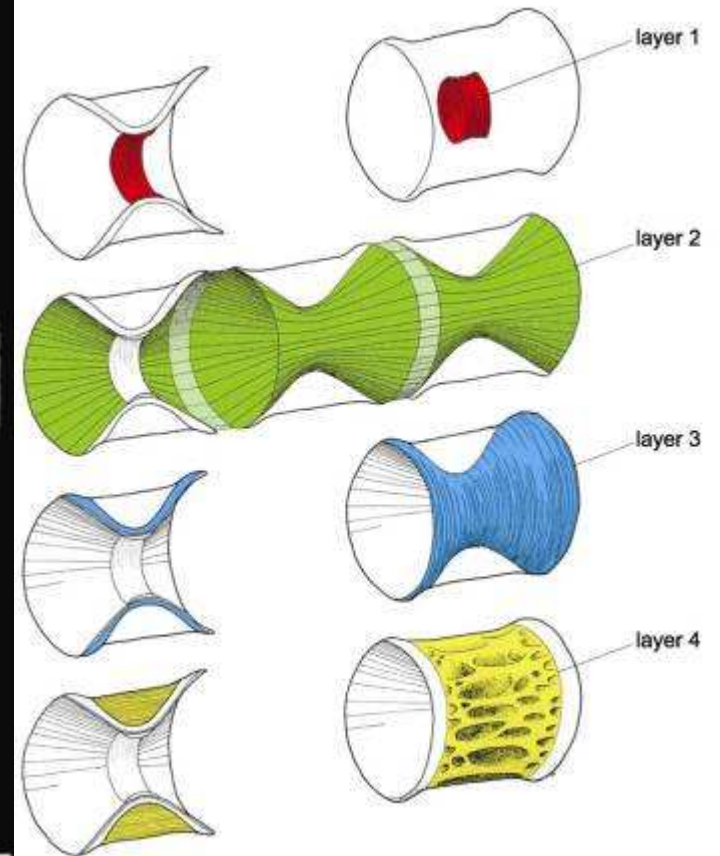
Norvik, Grotmol, Totland og Kryvi, 2005



1000 dC

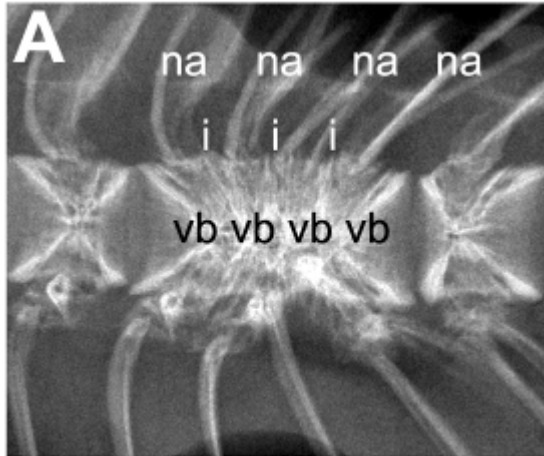


smolt

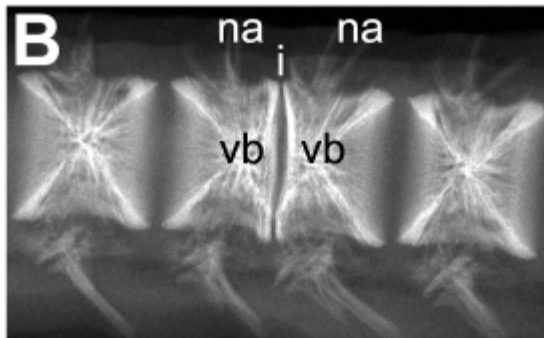


Norvik, Grotmol, Totland og Kryvi, 2005

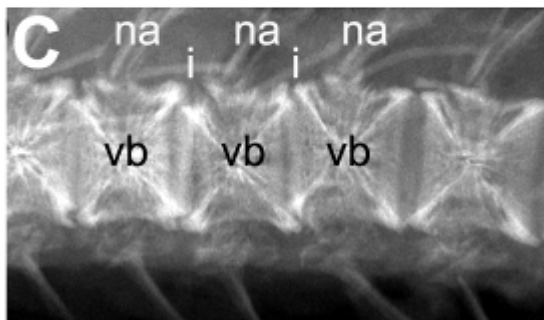
Different types of vertebral deformities in farmed salmon



← Fusions



← Compressions (tail region)



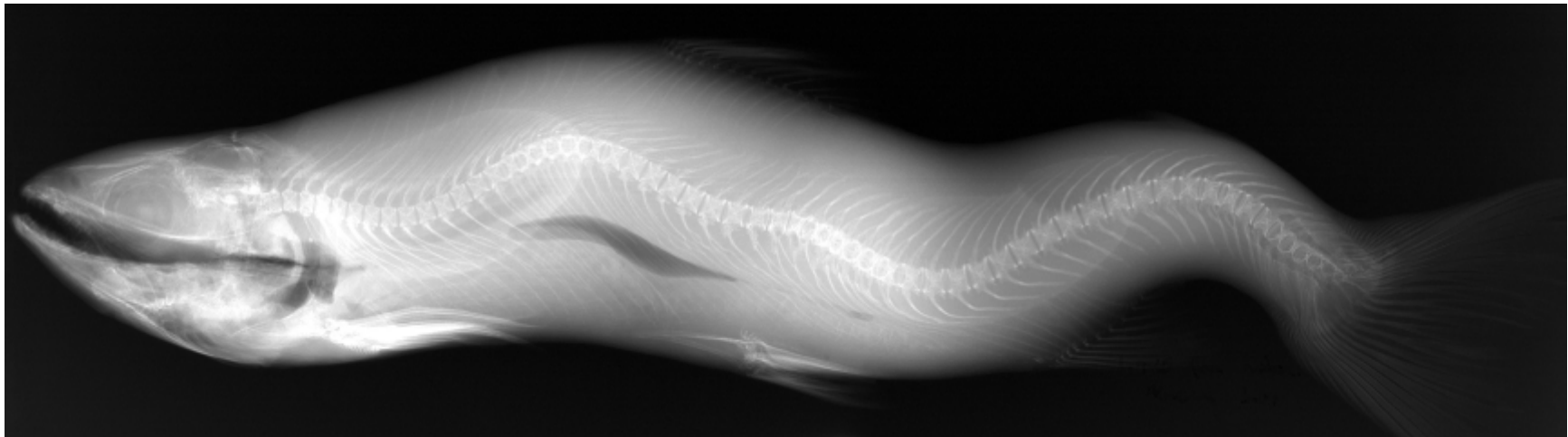
← Dislocations

*Fjelldal mfl. 2007a,
Aquaculture*

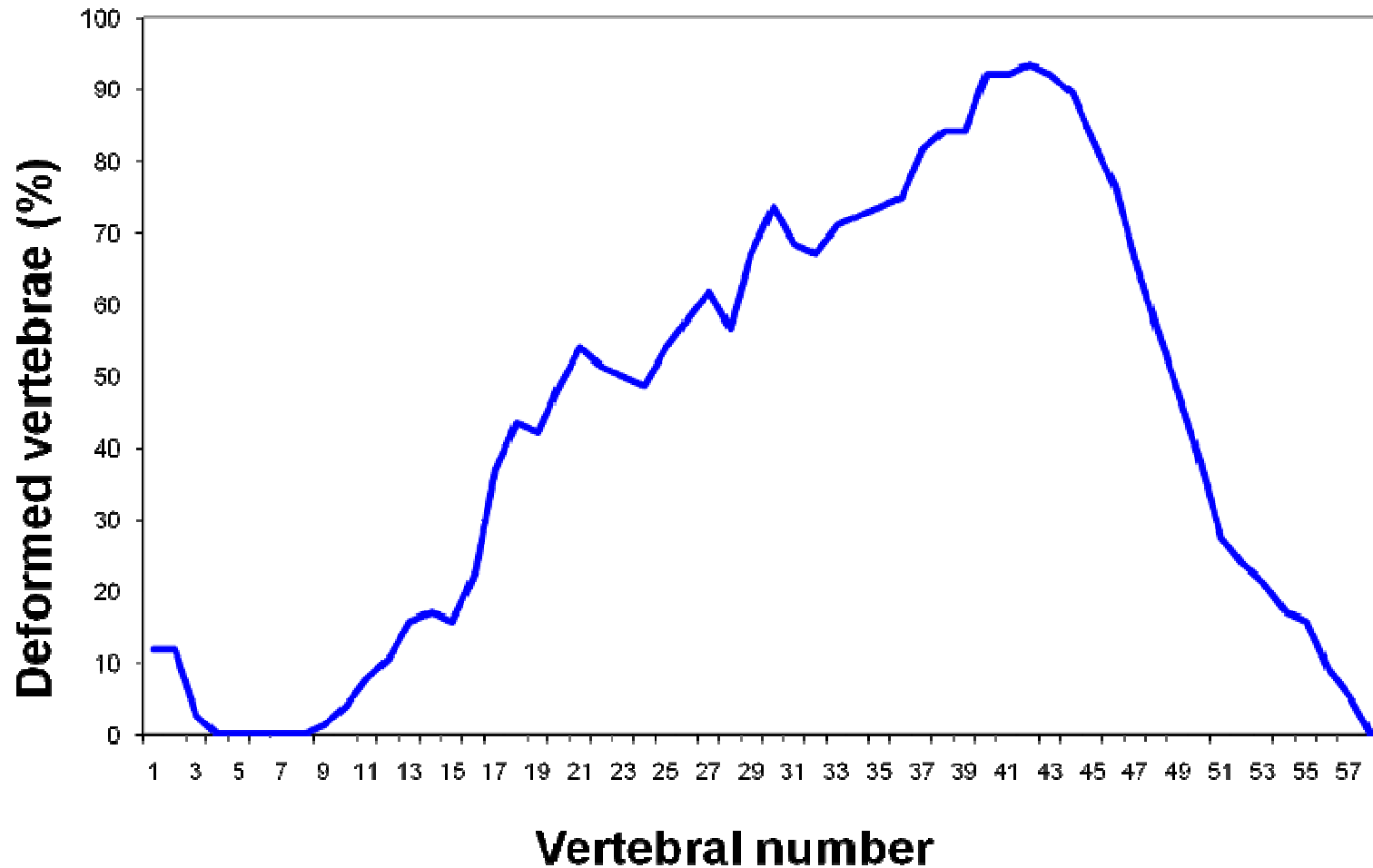
Shortened body



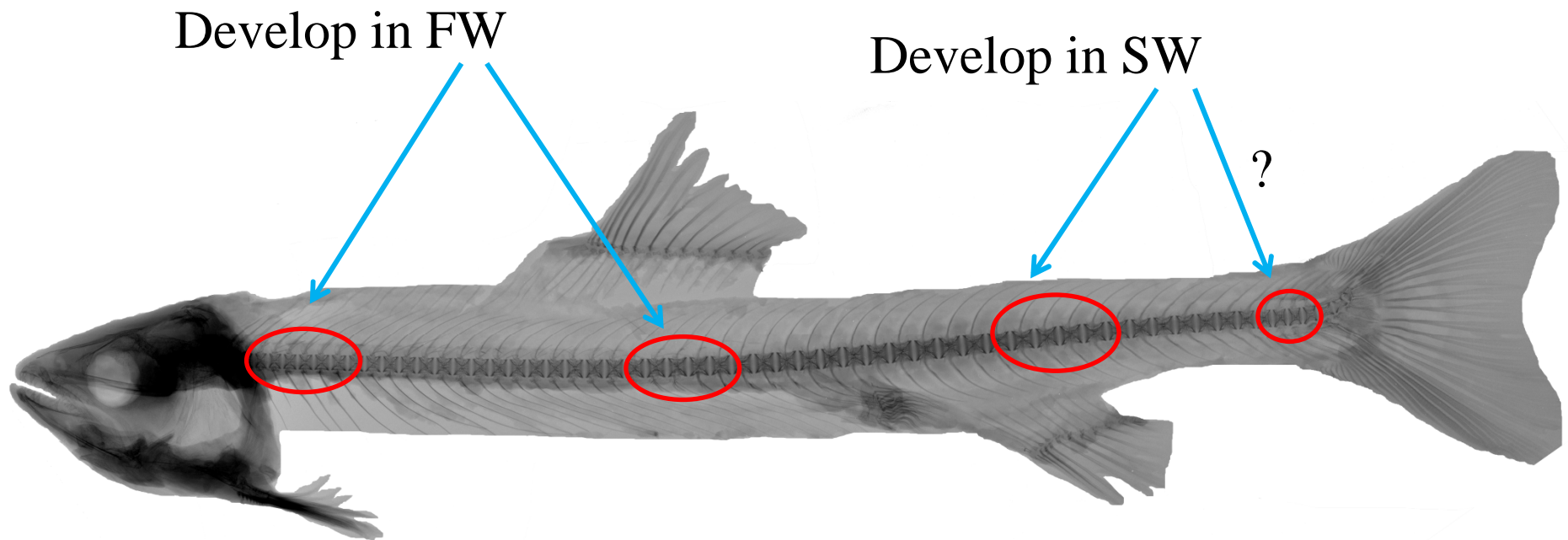
Curvatures



Predominant locations for vertebral deformities – field study with harvestsize salmon 2006.



Predominant locations vertebral deformities



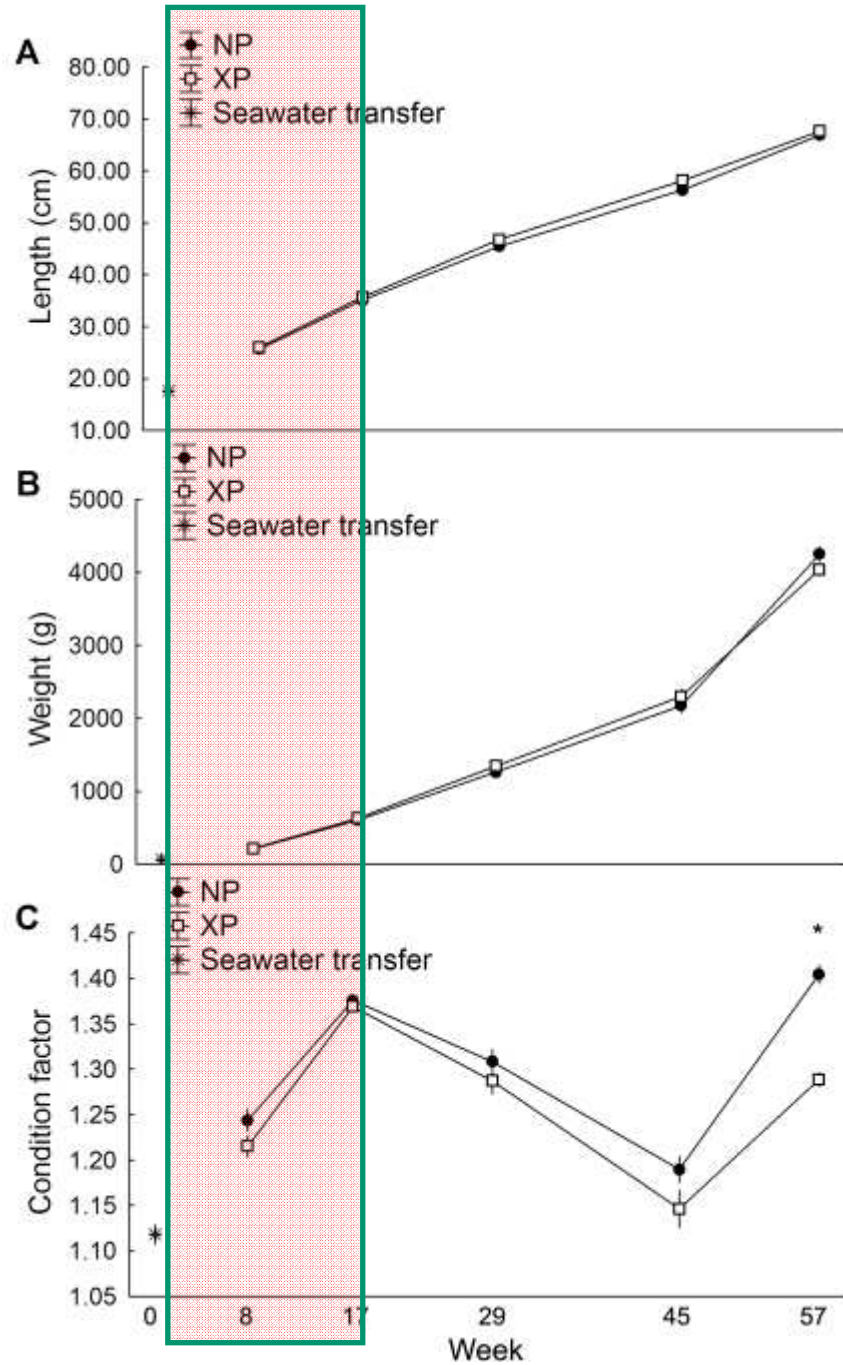
Dietary phosphorous during the early SW phase

- 9000 vaccinated 0+ smolt from commercial farm.
- Fed diets with a normal (0.6% available P) or high mineral (0.9% available P) level from SW transfer (60 g, Aug) until 500 g (Dec), thereafter fed a common diet until 4 kg (Sept). Three 15x15 m seacages per diet.

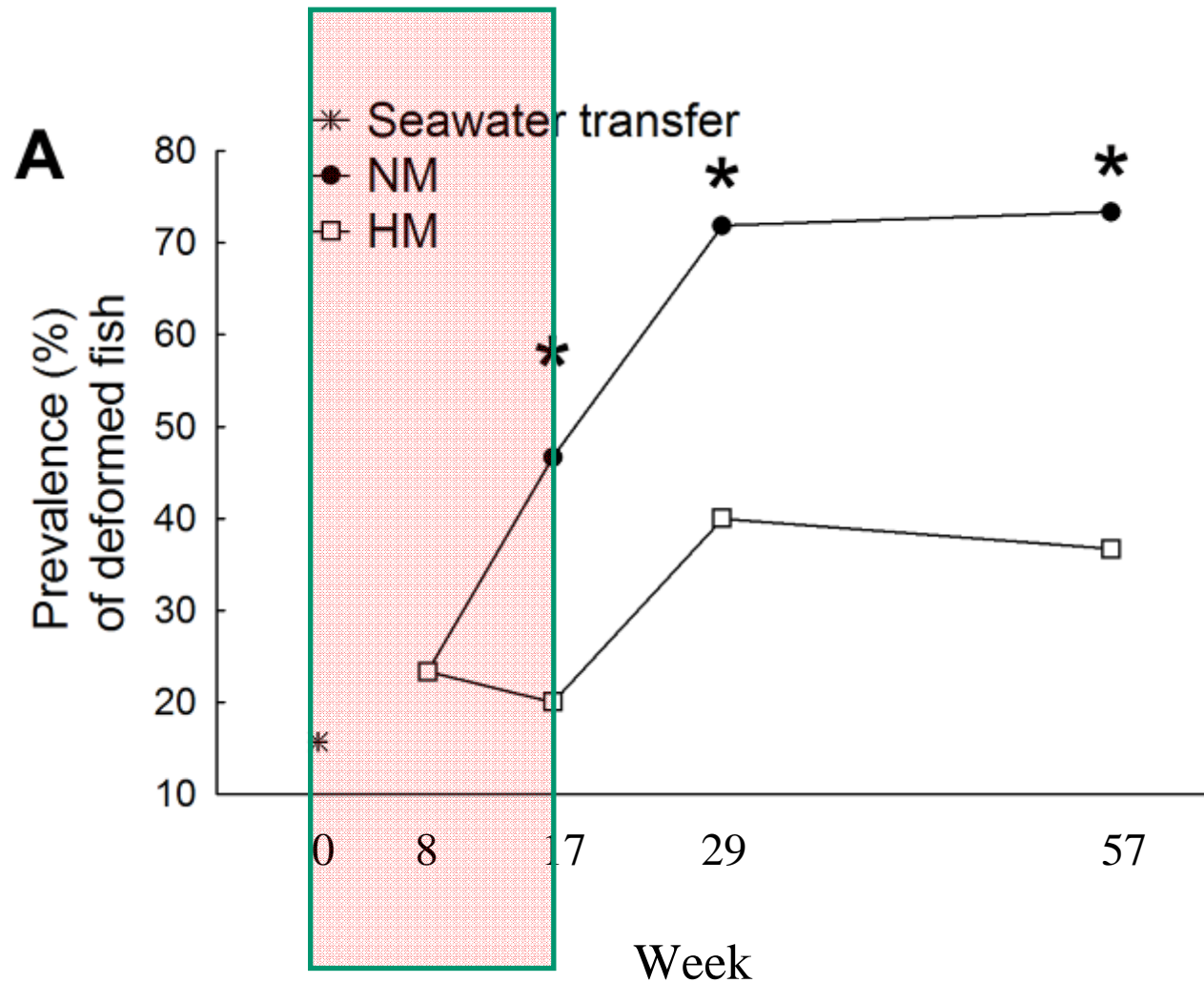


*Fjelldal et al., 2008,
Aquaculture Nutrition*

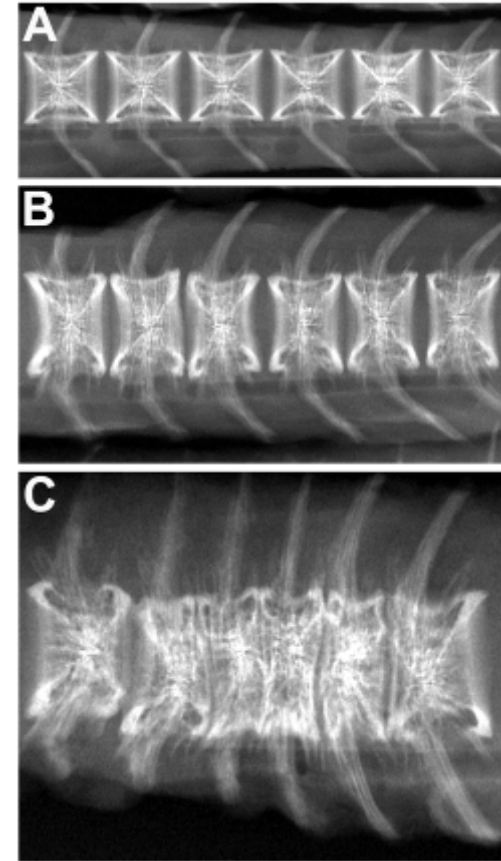
Dietary P



Dietary P



Reduced mechanical strength
and mineral content of
vertebrae in w 8

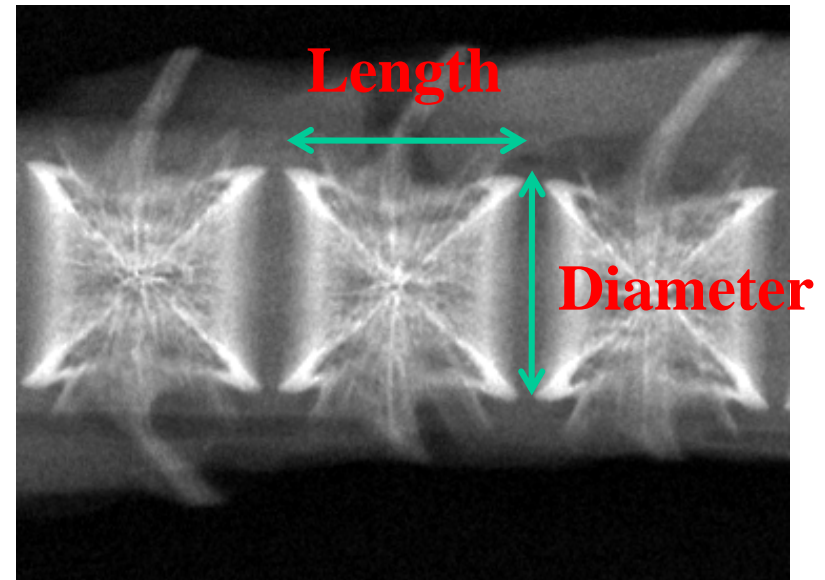


*Fjelldal et al., 2008,
Aquaculture Nutrition*

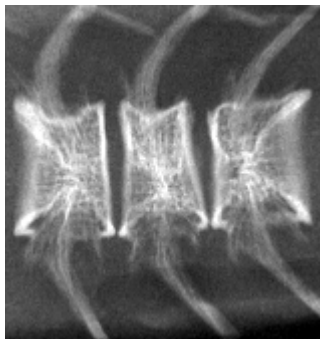
Dietary P

Vertebral morphology at harvest

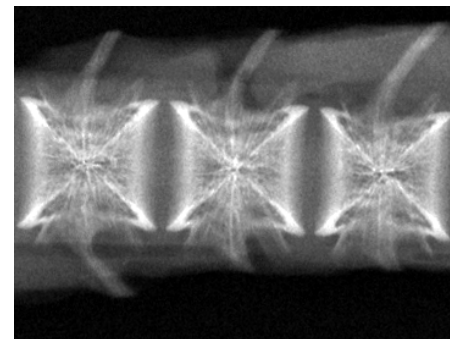
- The ratio between length and diameter used as a measure for compression



Low length/diameter ratio

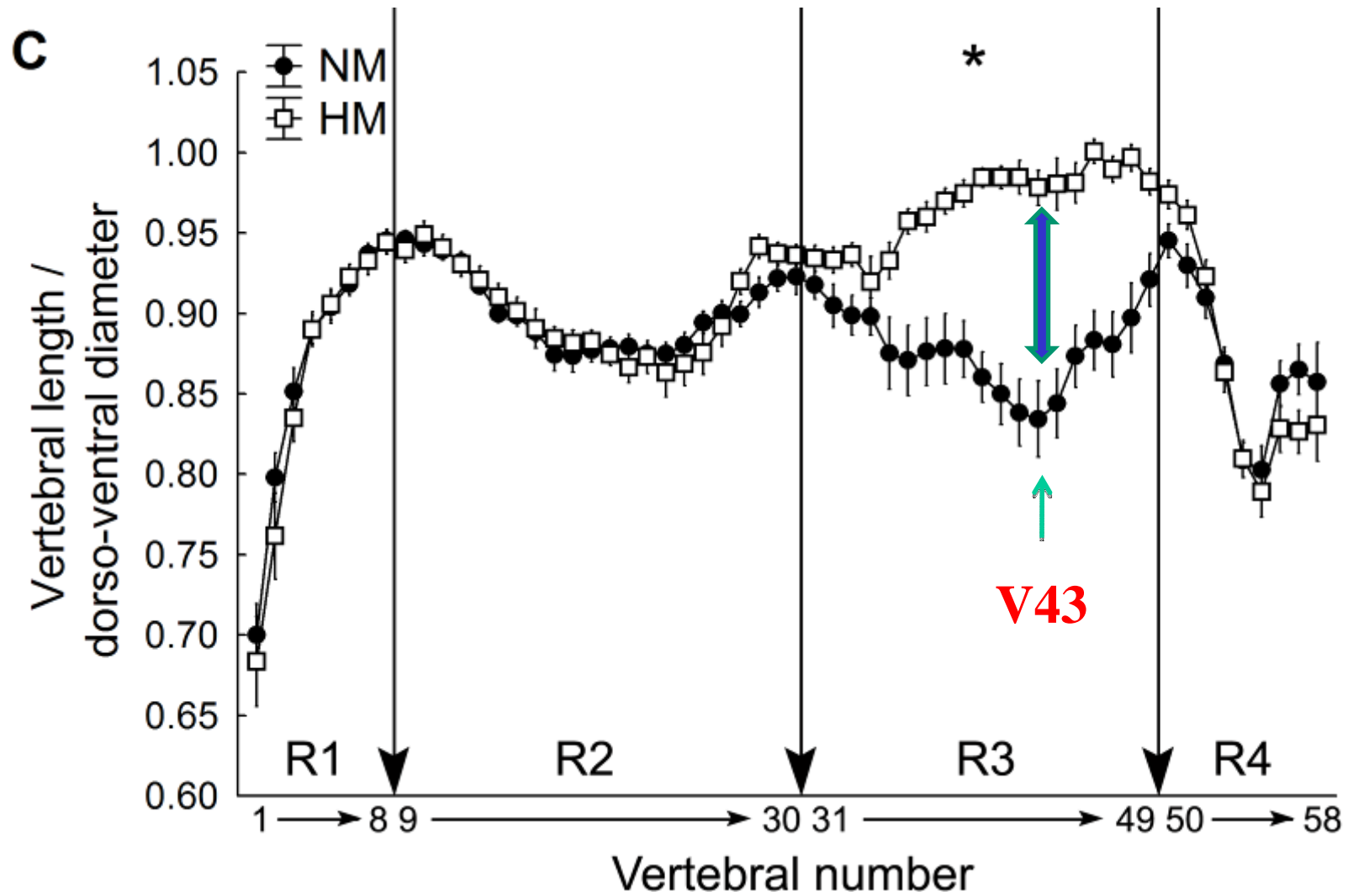


High length/diameter ratio



Dietary P

Harvest 4 kg

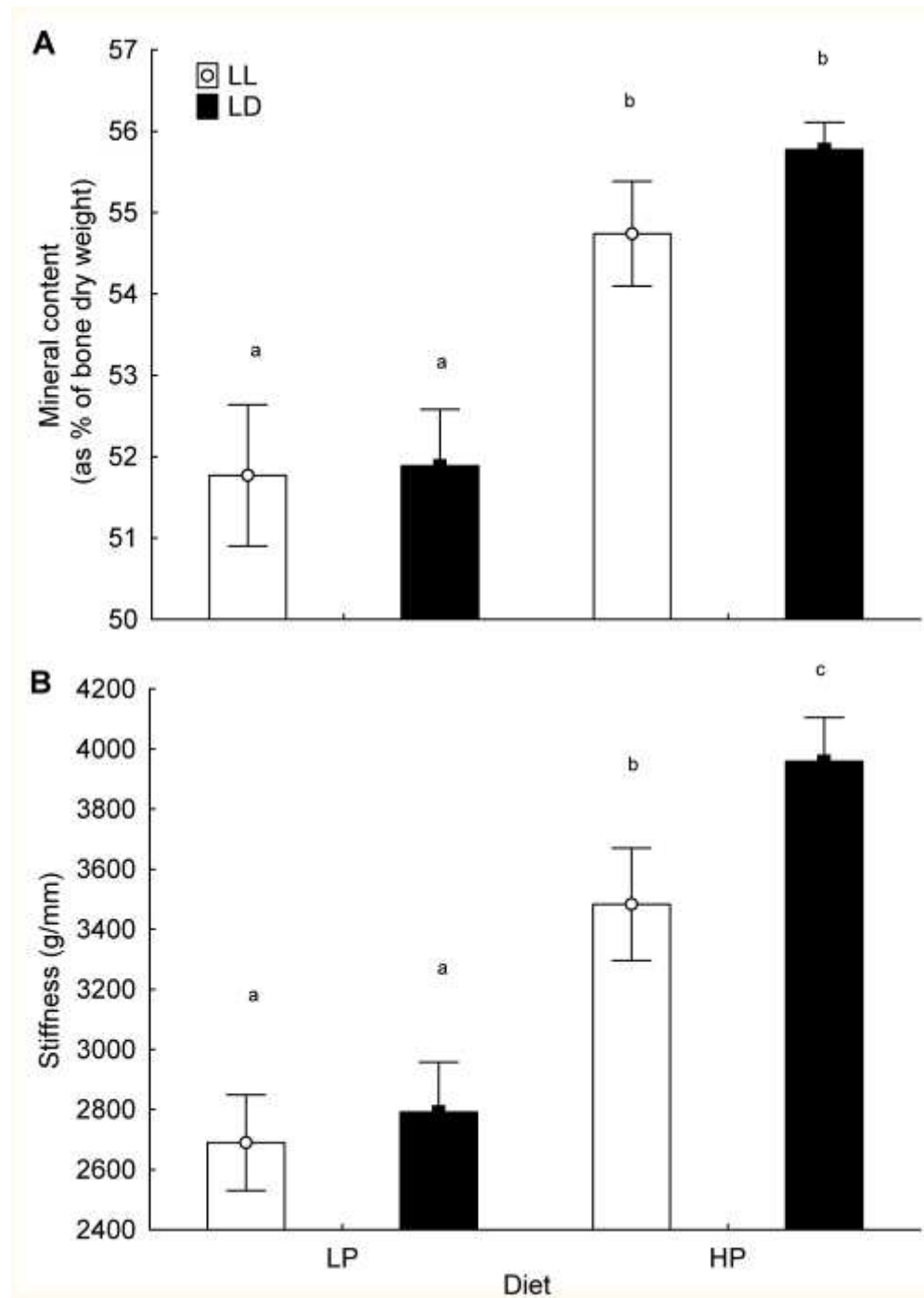


*Fjelldal et al., 2008,
Aquaculture Nutrition*

Dietary phosphorous during the early SW phase

- 0+ smolt reared in 1x1 m tanks, fed a diet with a low (0.4% available P) or high P (0.8% available P) content under LL or 12:12 LD.
- Bone strength and mineral content measured in vertebrae 40-43 after 50 days of feeding.

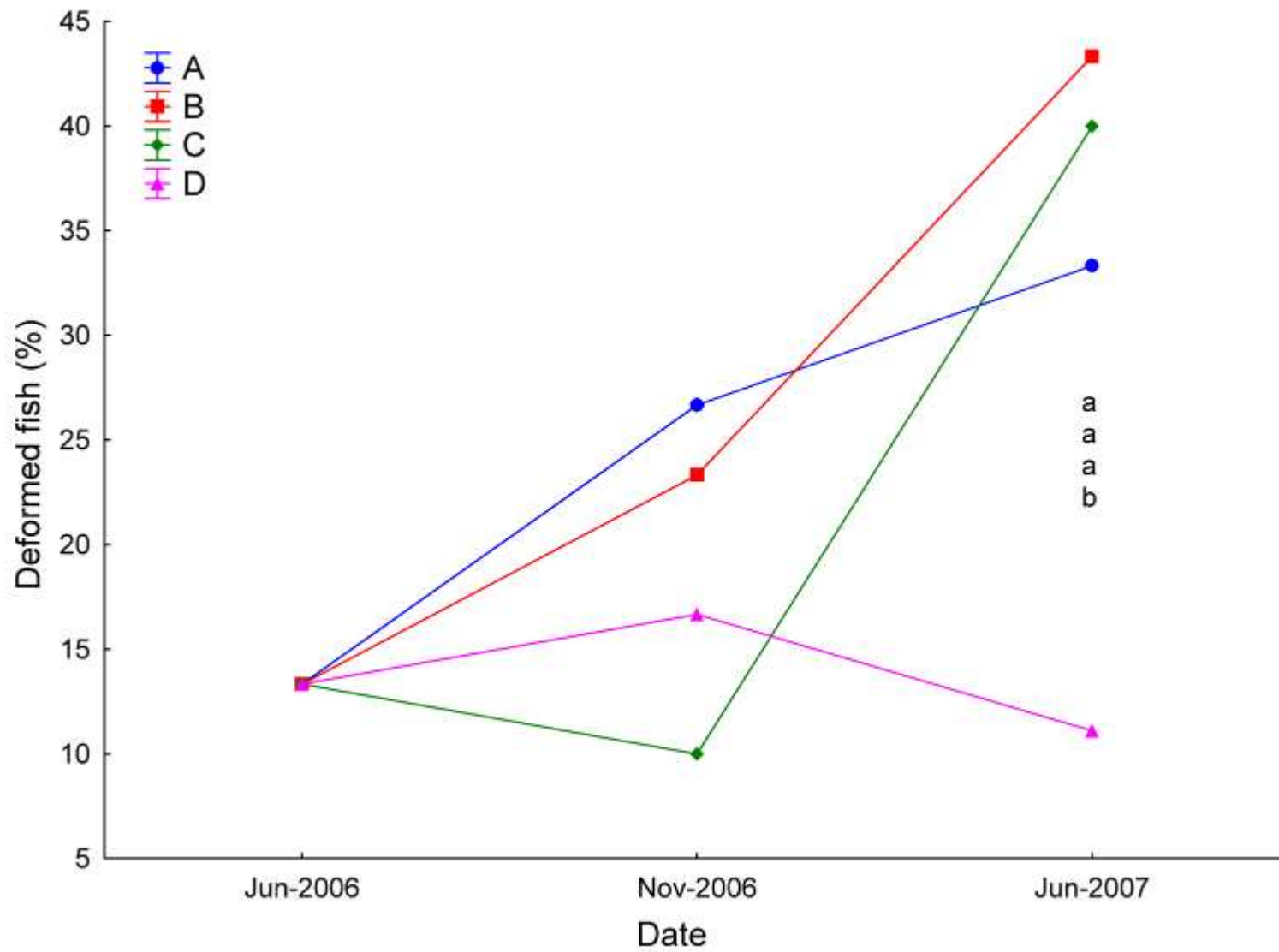
Dietary P



Marine or vegetable diets

- 1+ smolt feed a pure fish oil and fish meal based diet, a pure vegetable oil and vegetable meal based diet, or one of two marine diets with different inclusion levels of vegetable oil and meal (4 diets in total).
- Fed for 1 year (350 g to 3.5 kg).

Feed resources



Feed resources

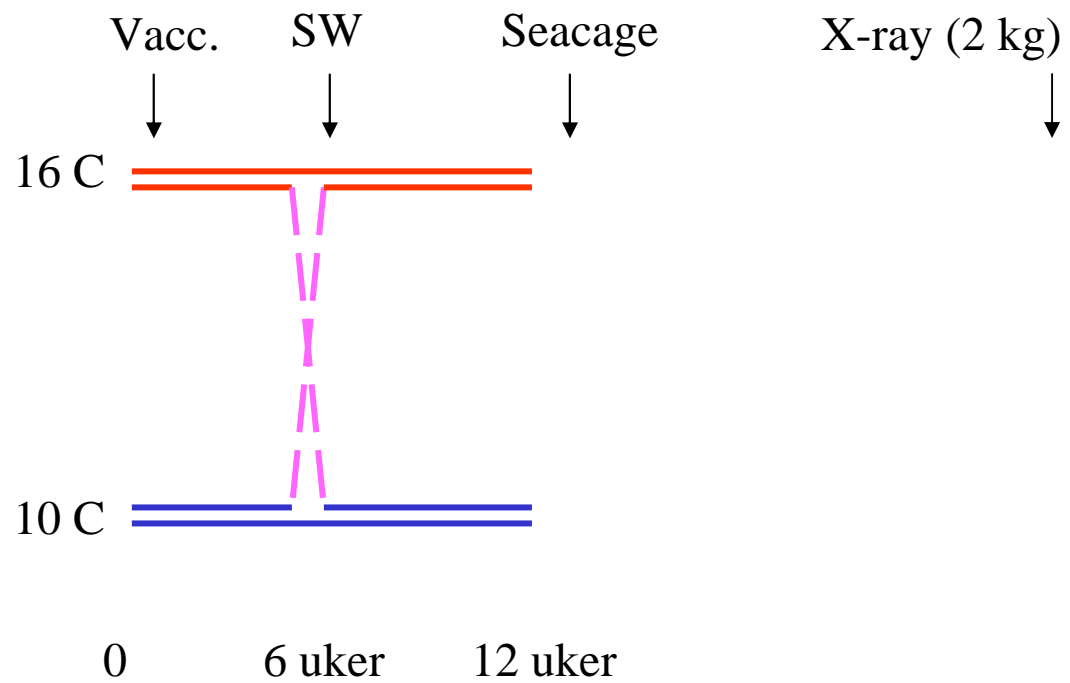
Category	Diet			
	A (n)	B (n)	C (n)	D (n)
1-2 deformed vertebrae	6	8	6	4
3-10 deformed vertebrae	8	4	5	1
11-18 deformed vertebrae	1	1	1	

Water temperature during smoltification and the early seawater phase

- Vaccinated or unvaccinated 0+ smolt reared at 10 or 16 degrees C during smoltification (6 w) and the early seawater phase (6 w).
- Four 1x1 m tanks per temperature regime, vaccinated and unvaccinated fish in each tank.
- Thereafter all groups were transferred to a common 15x15 m sea cage.



Temperature



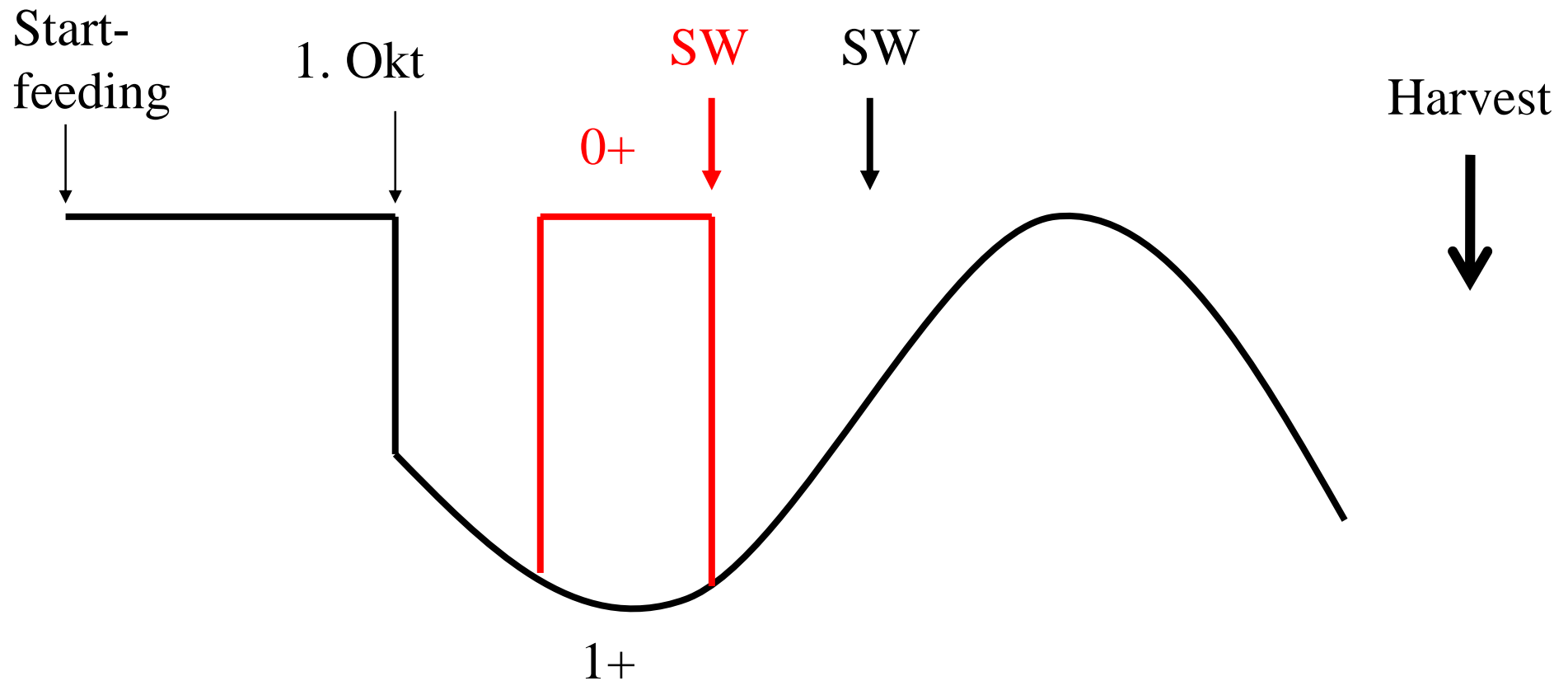
Temperature

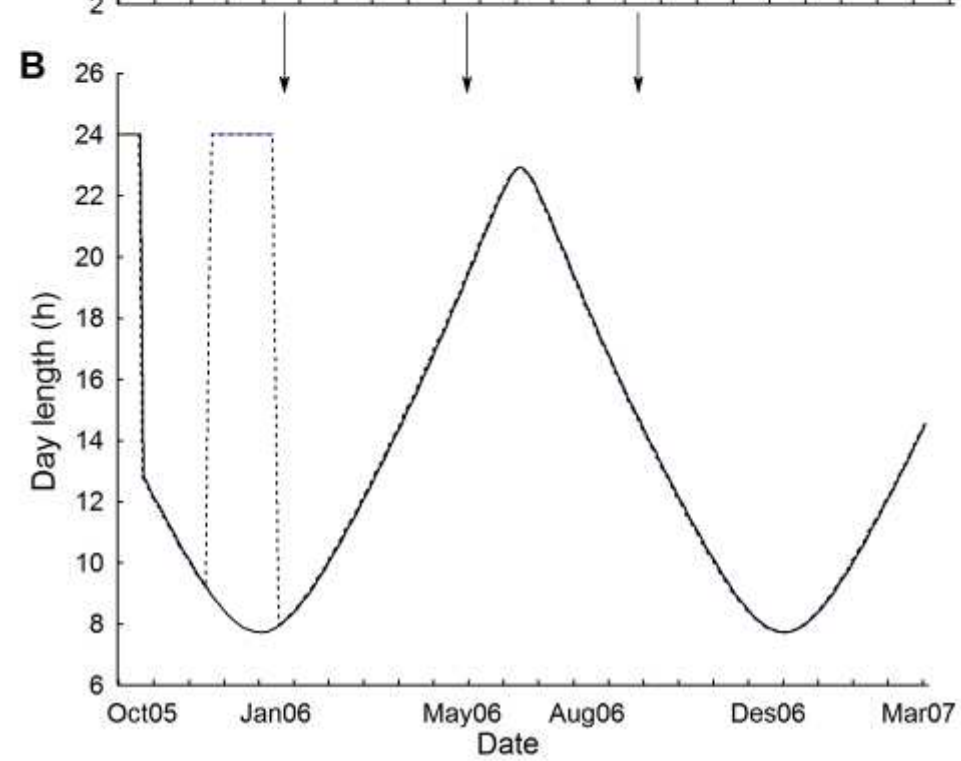
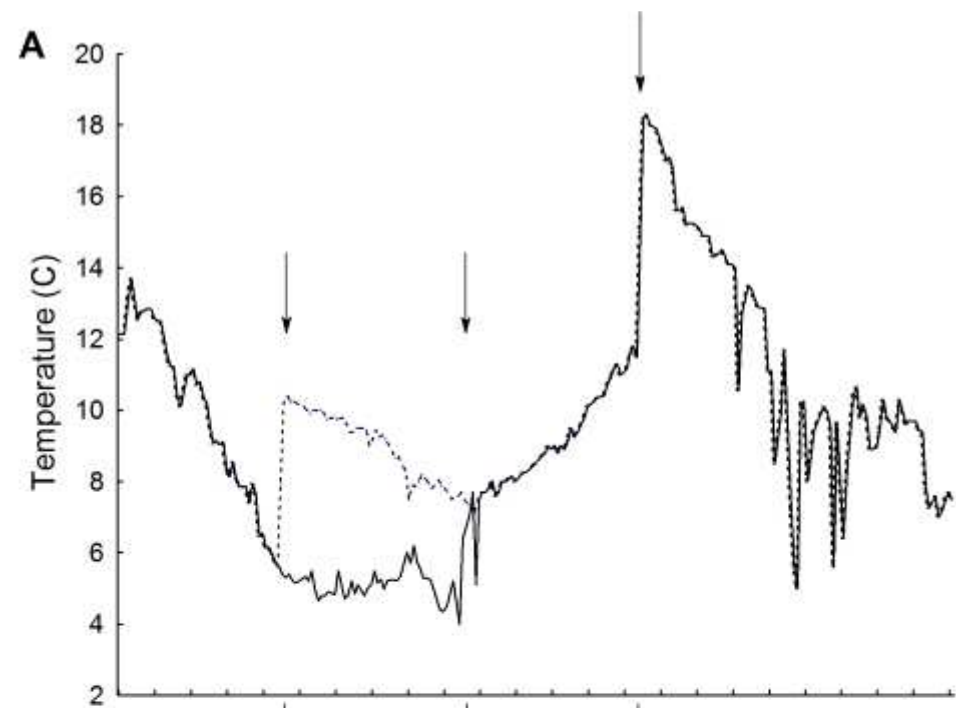
Vertebral deformities at harvest ~2 kg

Group	% def fish (x-ray)	% down grading (palpation)
10-10 UV	27	2
10-10 V	44	3
10-16 UV	94	13
10-16 V	88	17
16-10 UV	65	3
16-10 V	60	3
16-16 UV	92	22
16-16 V	90	27
Reference value	17	3

Breeding

- Wild (Lærdal), farmed (Mowi) and wild-hybrid salmon reared in commune as 0+ and 1+ smolt and evaluated for vertebral deformities at harvest.

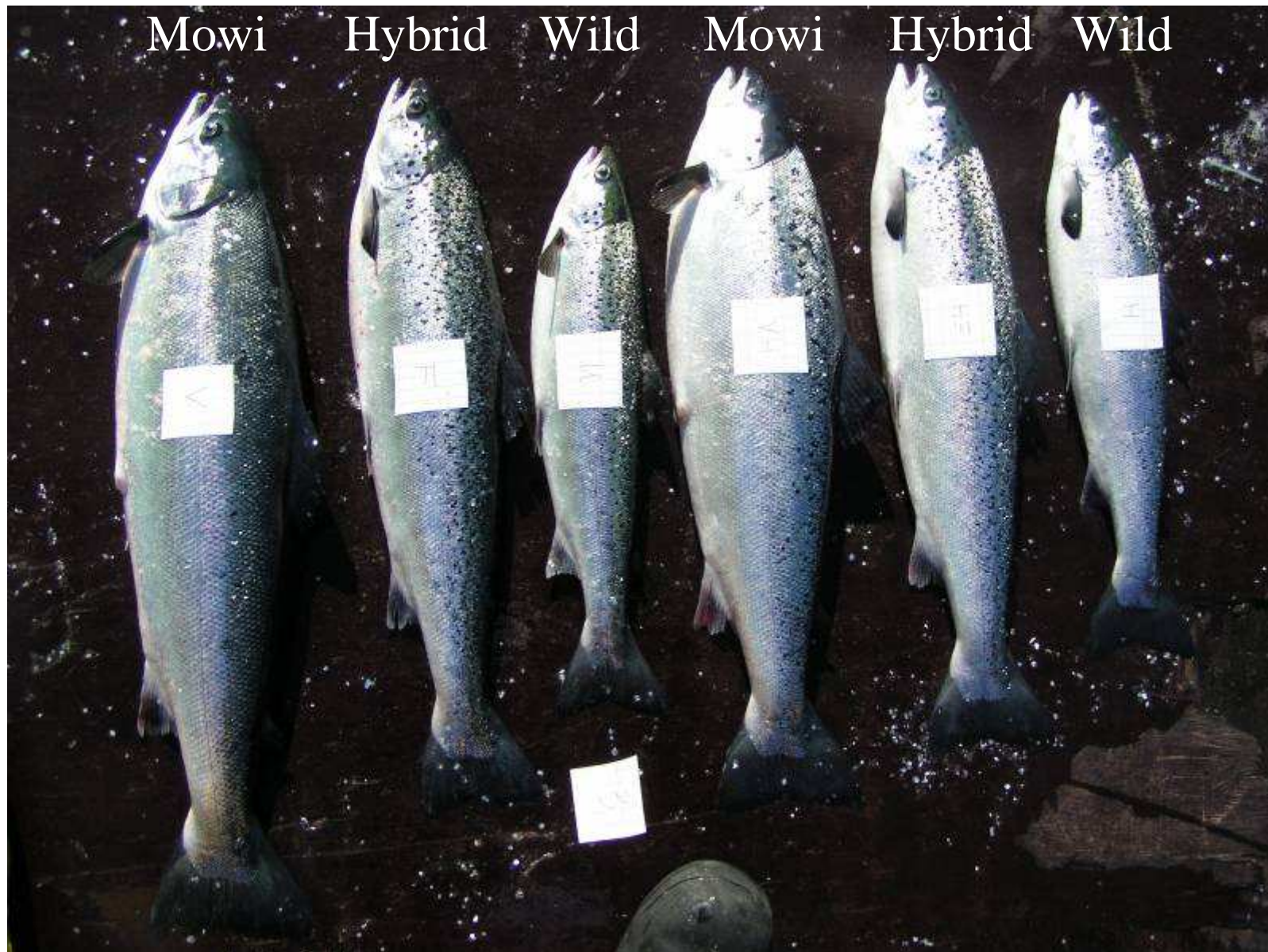


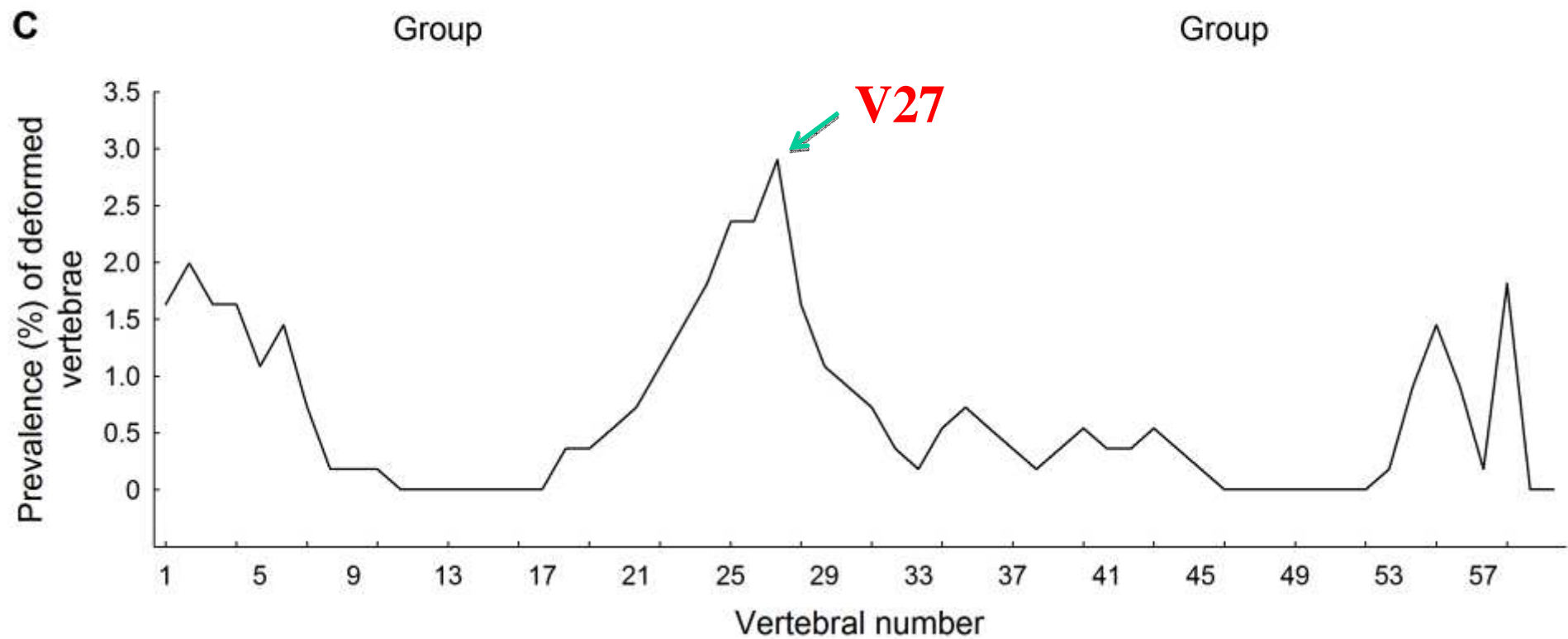
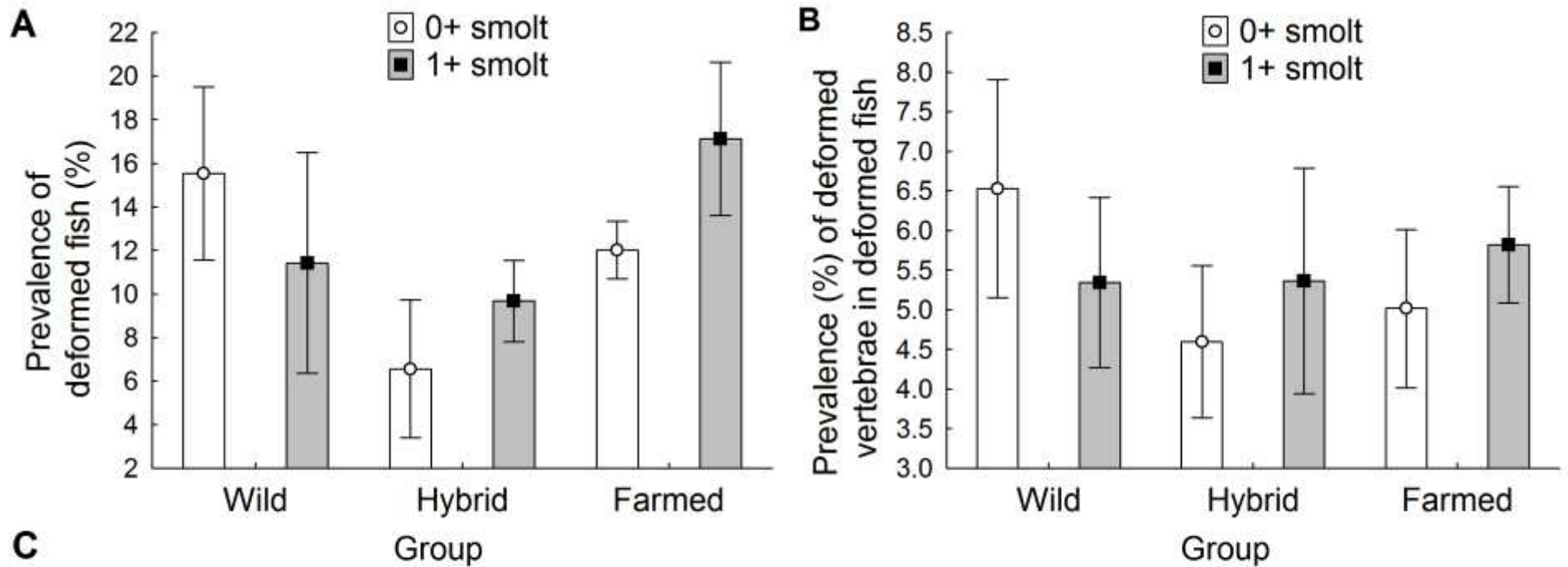


Breeding

0+

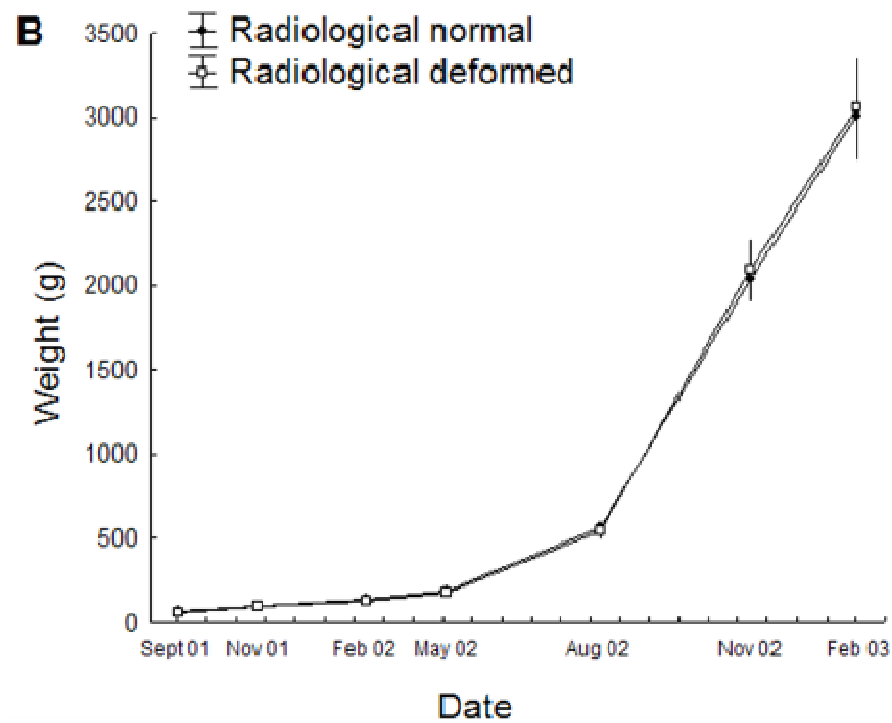
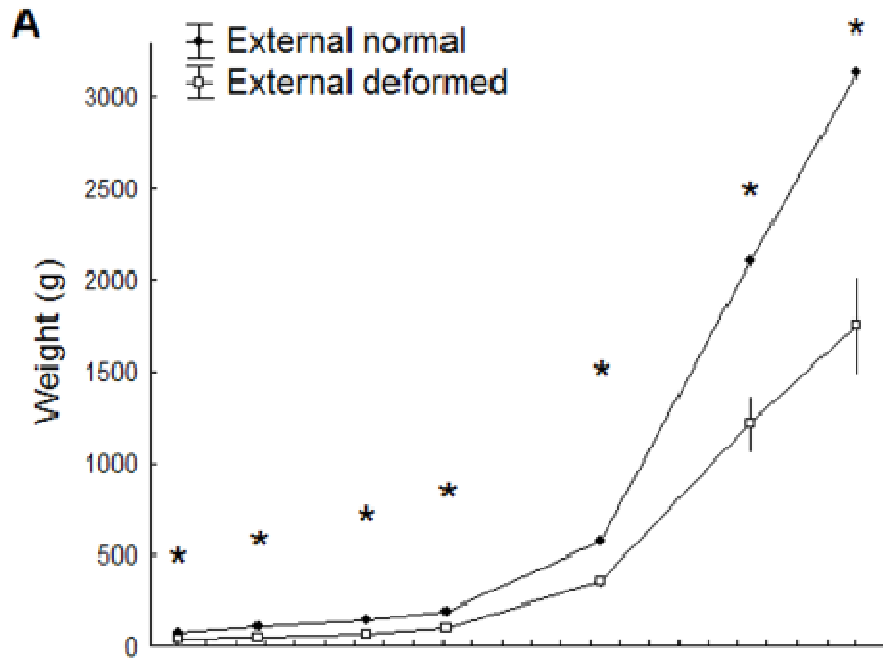
1+

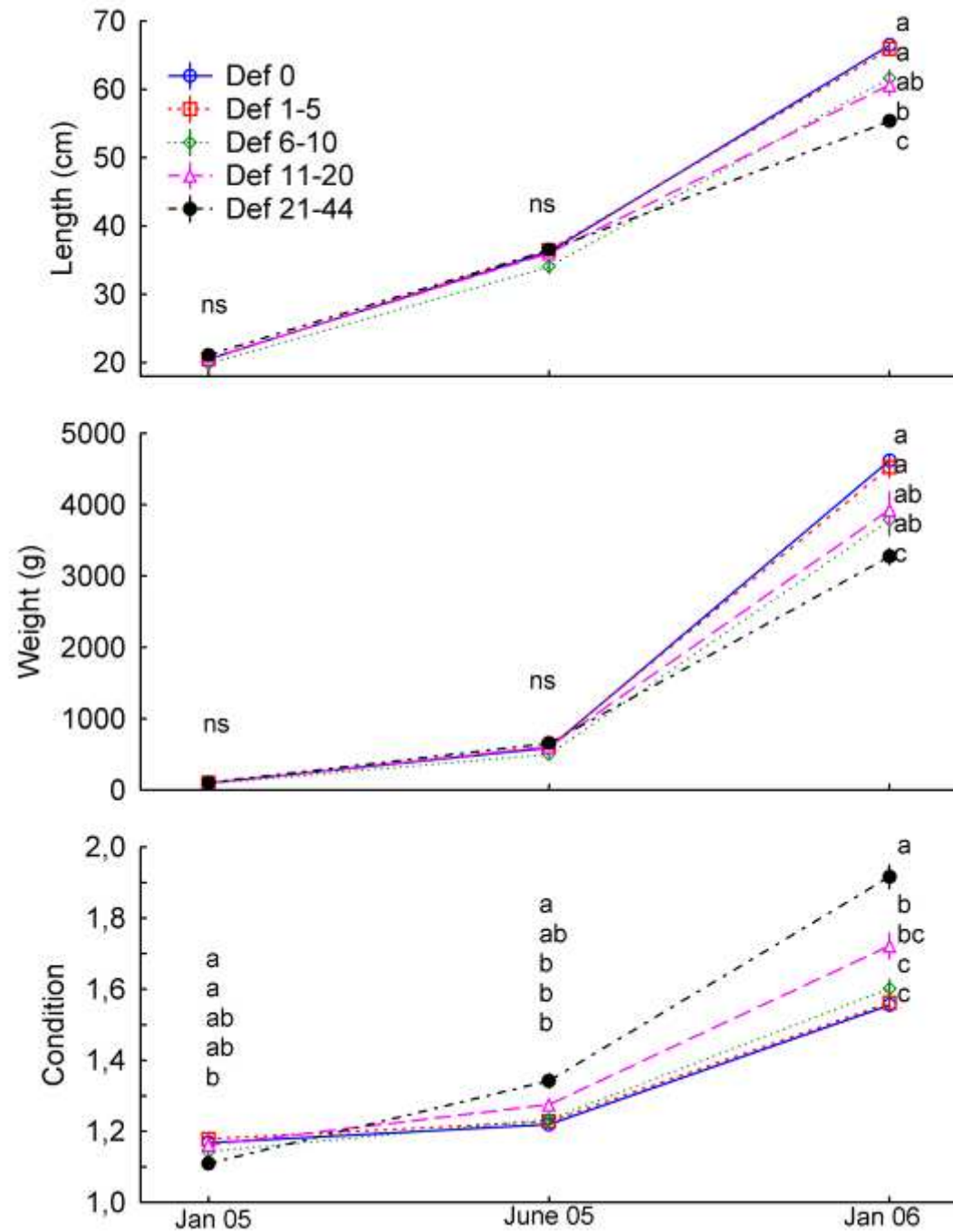




Vertebral deformities – implications for fish welfare

- A shortened vertebral column will affect the musculature and most probably increase the energy demand for swimming.
- Can affect swimming skills and feed intake.
- Pain??
- Impact on growth?





Conclusions

- Compression of caudal vertebrae in both field and experimental studies.
- Deformities around V27 develops in FW, while those around V43 develops in SW.
- Diet composition (P) and temperature important during the early SW phase.
- Temperature more powerful effect than vaccination.
- No effect of breeding under "nice" environmental conditions.
- Impaired growth in fish with more than 10 deformed vertebrae.