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## Development of Fishing Tourism in Selected Agritourism Farms in Podlasie Province

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## **DEVELOPMENT OF FISHING TOURISM IN SELECTED AGRITOURISM FARMS IN PODLASIE PROVINCE**

### **Abstract**

Fishing tourism has many followers. Tourists plan their stay mainly in water regions and as for the accommodation they choose agritourism farms. Fishing fans are willing to use the services of accommodation and some food. Fishing tourism might have a significant influence on the development of agritourism farms. A good example of this can be some chosen agritourism farms in Podlasie province. Some studies have shown that tourism affects the attractiveness of fishing farms, and hence it is worth to take actions to improve its development.

**Keywords:** fishing tourism, angling, agritourism, agritourism farm

### **Introduction**

The changes that occurred after the transformation of socio-economic system in Poland are conducive to the development of different types and forms of tourism. Tourism, as a branch of economy and a way of spending free time is becoming increasingly important in recent years. As a form of recreation and economic activity it is, and it should be, one of the most important factors initiating processes of economic change. It is estimated that tourism can be ranked second only to electronics and computing among the branches of economy as far as the amount of generated income is concerned, being ahead of such industries

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as petrochemical and automotive. Tourism is not a homogeneous part of the national economy. Its development and operation involves construction, agriculture, forestry, transport, trade, and other branches of economy.

More and more tourists want to gain new experiences, and learn about the culture and folklore of various regions. In Poland a new form of alternative tourism, called an agritourism, came into existence in the early nineties of the twentieth century. Its dynamic development has become noticeable over the last few years, which is associated with an increase in the attractiveness of rural areas, the propagation of regional culture, and increasing the number of agritourism farms offering various forms of physical activity. Angling is offered as a way of spending free time in many agritourism farms in Podlasie province.

In Podlasie region there are numerous lakes, rivers, reservoirs and ponds that create good conditions for rest and recreation. Some agritourism farms are located near various reservoirs, and angling is a perfect way of spending free time, so its inclusion in the offer of agritourism farms is a good and inspirational idea, given such favorable natural conditions in many farms. More and more people go angling, and the combination of recreation with fishing is a good option both for a client and an agritourism farm owner. Angling contributes to the growth of environmental awareness, teaches how to commune with nature and allows anyone to relax after work.<sup>1</sup> For some people, angling is also a sport that caters to the desire to compete. Angling clubs are being created in the region of Podlasie, and their membership is growing each year. This demonstrates the significant interest in angling of the inhabitants of Podlasie region, as well as people who live in other parts of the country.

The purpose of this article is to present state and development potential of angling on agricultural farms in Podlasie province. The author wishes to point out the impact of angling on the development of agritourism farms and rural areas. The study is based on the research that was carried out, the analysis of professional literature, and the own experience of the author.

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<sup>1</sup> A. Sikora, *Wędkarstwo muchowe*, Wyd. Multico, Warszawa 1997, p. 27.

## 1. The organization and area of studies

The selection of the study area had a crucial impact on the solving of a research problem and the confirmation of hypotheses that had been put. A questionnaire was used in the research study. It contained 32 questions, both open and closed. The questionnaire was sent to the owners of agritourism farms and potential anglers staying on holiday on the farm, who practice such a form of recreation. The largest group were people between the ages of 32 and 65 years (67%), in the second place there were young people aged 15–32 years old (24%), and then young people under the age of 15 years (9%). The studies have assessed what is the interest in angling among the people who are on holidays and what are the expectations of customers with respect to service providers. This allowed the formulation of conclusions that will be very helpful in conducting agritourism activities. The study was conducted in the period from January to April 2013 in 22 selected agritourism farms located in five border counties in Podlasie province, which are situated near the surface water and have angling in their offer (Table 1). The owners of agritourism farms are also able to provide basic information on angling.

Table 1

Selected counties of the north-eastern part of Podlasie province

The name of a county	The area of a county (in square km)	Type of surface water	The number of agritourism farms including those that offer angling services
białostocki	2987	Rivers: Narew, Supraśl, artificial lakes: Siemianówka, Zarzeczany, and Czapielówka	83 (8)
bielski	1385	The river Narew, Nurzec, Orlanka	9 (-)
hajnowski	1624	Rivers: Narew, Narewka, artificial lakes Bachmaty, and Repczyce	101 (5)
siemiatycki	1460	Rivers: Bug, Nurzec, and an artificial lake in Siemiatycze	42 (8)
sokólski	2054	Rivers Biebrza, Sokołda, Łosośna, Sidra, Słoja, and Sokólski artificial lake	40 (4)
Total			275 (25)

Source: own study based on data provided by the Regional Farmers' Advisory Center in Szepietowo and a thesis by Ł. Andzielewicz, PB, Białystok 2013.

The studies have shown that those rivers and artificial lakes that are presented in Table 1 were the most popular ones. They are stocked with fry and attract many angling fans. There are also smaller rivers and artificial lakes in the analyzed area where angling is also practiced.

The biggest number of agritourism farms that provide angling services can be found in counties of Białystok (8) and Siemiatycze (8). Only in the county of Bielsk Podlaski there are no farms providing this type of service (Table 1).

Owners of agritourism farms who want to encourage the use of their services, place their offers near grocery shops, fishing stores, municipal offices, municipalities, as well as during different competitions. However, angling competitions are those that attract the biggest number of people, as there are many experienced anglers who take part in them. They benefit from the accommodation on an agritourism farm at the same time. Therefore, research that is carried out during a fishing contest can provide a wealth of valuable information. It should be emphasized that anglers were filling in their questionnaires with great satisfaction, and some of them even expressed their desire to know the final results.

The second group consisted of some of the owners of agritourism farms in the audited counties. They were also given a research survey. The vast majority of agritourism farms were located near rivers such as Narew, Biebrza, Supraśl, Bug, Narewka, and not far from artificial lakes such as Siemianówka and Repczyce, as well as in Sokółka and Siemiatycze. The greatest interest in the results of the studies has been shown by the owners of agritourism farms located near Siemianówka artificial lake, and the rivers Bug, Narew, Biebrza and Supraśl.

## **2. The essence of angling and fishing tourism**

The vast majority of respondents take part in fishing competitions – 37% of anglers participate in such events regularly, and 42% at least a few times a year. This type of event is an opportunity for the development of fishing tourism. Fishing competitions are mostly held in naturally valuable areas, around some water bodies, which attracts many people interested in angling. Anglers are not generally looking for luxurious hotels, they are completely pleased with agritourism farms situated in the vicinity of some water bodies as they are interested in fishing competitions that are organized nearby.

It is believed that the best source of information on the fishery is the knowledge of the local population or meetings in angling clubs.<sup>2</sup> People who have lived near a body of water since their childhood frequently go fishing, which makes them know the best time of feeding and behavior of fish. Therefore, the potential agritourism farm owner should have some knowledge in this field and advise their visitors. If his knowledge is quite rich, then he can provide services in the field of fishing guiding.

Angling is a hobby, a recreational activity and a sport involving fishing with a pole.<sup>3</sup> The following have the right of fishing: the members of Polski Związek Wędkarski (PZW) [Polish Angling Association] and persons who are not affiliated with PZW but have a fishing license, as well as amateur anglers, after paying applicable fees. The exception are fisheries that are located mostly on agricultural farms. These are private bodies of water, where separate laws are applicable. In such bodies of water rules are determined by farm owners and they can differ from the Rules of Amateur Fishing.

Another important element is the purchase of water equipment. Renting agritourism farm on one's own can be a significant undertaking. It often happens that in order to fish effectively a floating agent is needed, such as a canoe, a boat or a dinghy, because most of the places are not accessible from the shore. A big advantage is to have an internal combustion engine provided by the owner of an agricultural farm which would be used as a means of transportation to get around the water basin. With such equipment provided by agritourism farm a tourist will not worry about where to acquire the equipment needed to facilitate fishing.

Not all tourists are professional anglers. Some of them fish recreationally and very rarely. The owner of an agritourism farm, to raise its attractiveness, may sign a contract with an angling club or the owner of a body of water. It is the perfect solution for both sides because the farm owner gets an equivalent of licenses sold, and a customer does not have to seek any places for fishing or deal with various institutions.

Typically, each angler has his own equipment he cares for. He or she collects baits, armors sets, and follows every novelty on the market. Preparing to go

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<sup>2</sup> *Encyklopedia rybactwa*, J.A. Szczerbowski (ed.), Wyd. Instytutu Rybactwa Śródlądowego, Olsztyn 2011 (co-author).

<sup>3</sup> A. Skrzypczak, *Ocena przydatności rekreacyjnej naturalnych zbiorników wodnych dla wędkarstwa*, "Folia Turistica" 2005, Kraków, No. 115, p. 87.

fishing consumes a lot of time, so it is good to have a rental of fishing equipment on a farm. It will serve novice anglers who want to catch the angling bug and to see for the first time in their live how fascinating that hobby is. A farm owner should have in his or her assortment several different types of fishing rods (spinning, float, ground, ice), reels, hooks, some fishing lines, floats, natural and artificial lures, weights, landing nets, netting for fish storage, and pliers for pulling hooks.<sup>4</sup> Such a set is more than enough to meet the customer's needs.

An important factor in the development of an agritourism farm is its promotion. It is useful for a farm to have its own website. The farm should give some announcements on different internet portals and have its own brochures. A good first step would be to take part in a regional tourism fair, which tends to be visited by a large number of people. To promote an agritourism farm that provides angling services, it is important to cooperate with different fishing clubs and post in fishing forums, where there is a very large flow of information. If the services provided by the owner of the farm are at a high level, then this news will spread very quickly and gaining new customers will not be a difficult endeavor.

Fishing can be divided as follows: angling on commercial fisheries, i.e. private ones, and fishing in public fisheries. All public fisheries in Poland belong to the Polish Angling Association, the organization that cares for their stocking. It also helps to preserve them and regulates the legal provisions.<sup>5</sup> To be able to practice angling on public waters each angler is obliged to observe the principles contained in the Rules of Amateur Fishing, which is a set of provisions concerning angling and the conservation of fish fauna.<sup>6</sup> These regulations apply to all anglers who fish on waters that are in use by the Polish Anglers' Association, both affiliated to the Association and those who are not affiliated, Polish citizens and foreigners alike.

In many places that were studied, so called ice fishing is practiced, which involves fishing on the frozen waters under the ice.<sup>7</sup> This kind of fishing is also organized in agritourism farms. It is practiced primarily in the winter months

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<sup>4</sup> Ł. Andzielewicz, *Rozwój turystyki wędkarskiej w gospodarstwach agroturystycznych województwa podlaskiego*, praca magisterska, Wyd. Politechnika Białostocka, Wydział Zarządzania, Białystok 2013.

<sup>5</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>6</sup> <http://www.falko-ryby.eu> (accessed 5.01.2013).

<sup>7</sup> A. Skarżyński, *Tajemnice wędkowania*, Wyd. Sport i Turystyka, Warszawa 1981, p. 25.

(from January to March), in minus temperatures. Therefore, in areas where there are surface waters it is worth thinking about expanding the offering and creating one's own commercial fisheries. This could increase the competitiveness and attractiveness of agritourism farm and improve family budget.

One area that is often visited by tourists is a county of Hajnówka. This is due to the fact that in the area there are Białowieża Forest, Siemianówka artificial lake and the Narew river, as well as a number of architectural monuments, which creates an attractive opportunity to rest and break from everyday urban life. In that area angling should mainly be developed because of the favorable conditions to practice it. Agritourism farms located near surface waters and forests are the most attractive for tourists. In addition to angling, visitors can enjoy other attractions such as water sports (swimming, canoeing, using water equipment), active leisure in the bosom of nature, camping, boat sailing, kayaking, boating, and rafting.

Attractive areas for the development of fishing tourism (and that fact would contribute to increase in the attractiveness of agritourism farms) are definitely the following localities and their surroundings: Białowieża, Narewka, Tykocin, Sokółka, Supraśl, Doktorce, Siemianówka, Siemiatycze, Drohiczyn, Mielnik, Strękowa Góra, Korycin, Topiło, and others. At the same time it would be helpful for the owner of the farm to become an advisor and a fishing guide who has good knowledge of water bodies and mainly of the hiding places and behavior of fish at any time of the year.

The tourist who is fishing must have a place where he or she can fulfill his or her intentions. Having their own pond that is well stocked with fry constitutes an advantage of each agritourism farm, which is associated with additional responsibilities such as its stocking, oxygenation of water, protection from poachers, and ensuring services, e. g. the price of fish that was caught.<sup>8</sup>

It is advisable for an agritourism farm to be located within a short distance from a given body of water (such as a lake, river, reservoir or a private well stocked pond), which will create greater business opportunities. Many service recipients believe that angling can become a significant way of attracting customers, because it is the most attractive way of spending free time after work.

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<sup>8</sup> M. Jalinik, *Typologia gospodarstw agroturystycznych jako determinanta rozwoju usług*, Wyd. Politechniki Białostockiej, Białystok 2005, p. 16.

### 3. The results of the survey

The study has shown that the largest number of respondents considered fishing as a hobby –

58% of respondents, 38% of them treat it as a sport, and only 4% were ready to use the fish that had been caught to supplement the food in their families (Figure 1).

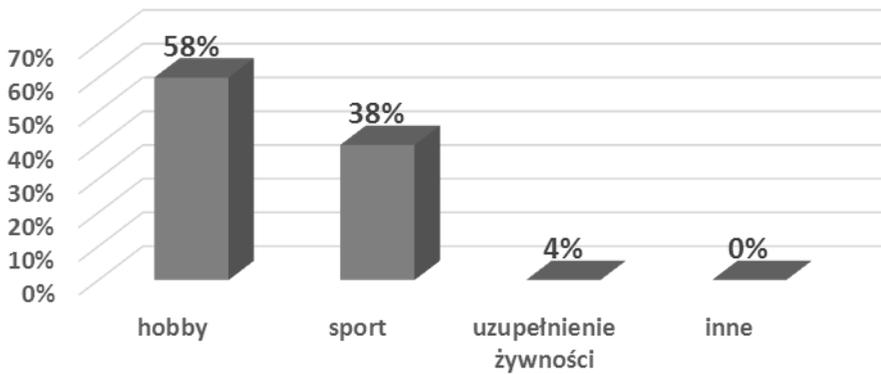


Fig. 1. Treatment of fishing in the opinion of the respondents

Source: the study based on surveys.

Participation in the fishing competitions organized by angling clubs varied among the individual respondents – Figure 2. Only 31% of the respondents participate regularly in the competitions, while 40% do it several times a year, 25% are those who take part in them occasionally, and 4% of respondents do not participate in them at all. Hence, it follows that fishing competitions are treated by the majority of anglers as amateur events, i.e. while resting and spending their leisure time they turn to an attractive form of recreation that is angling.

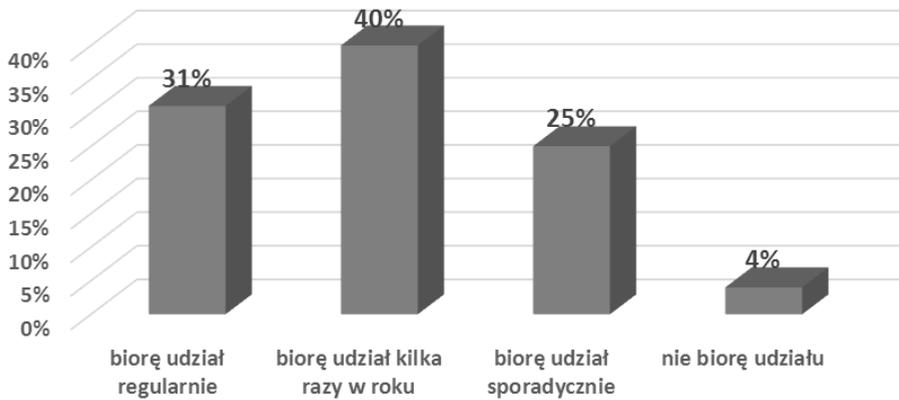


Fig. 2. Participation in the fishing competitions organized by angling clubs

Source: the study based on surveys.

Not all surface waters are equally visited by anglers. When asked which of the water bodies enjoys the greatest popularity among anglers, 45% of the respondents indicated Siemianówka artificial lake, 40% of them mentioned the river Narew, and 8% cited the river Biebrza. Other rivers such as Supraśl, Bug, Nurzec, and Orłanka, as well as other artificial lakes attract less popularity among anglers (Figure 3).

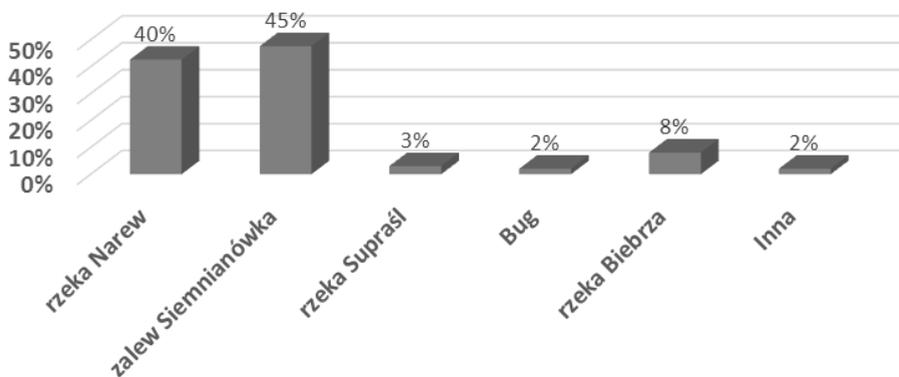


Fig. 3. The attractiveness of bodies of water in terms of the abundance of fish

Source: the study prepared on the basis of surveys.

It is important for each agritourism farm whether through the provision of fishing services tourism flow will increase on a farm. The answer to this question presents Figure 4. The respondents stated that fishing largely affects the development of agritourism services. 45% of the respondents are of such an opinion, while 31% thought it would increase significantly, 17% of them felt that the promotion has an impact on the development of angling on the farm, and 7% of the people surveyed said that it will increase to a lesser extent.

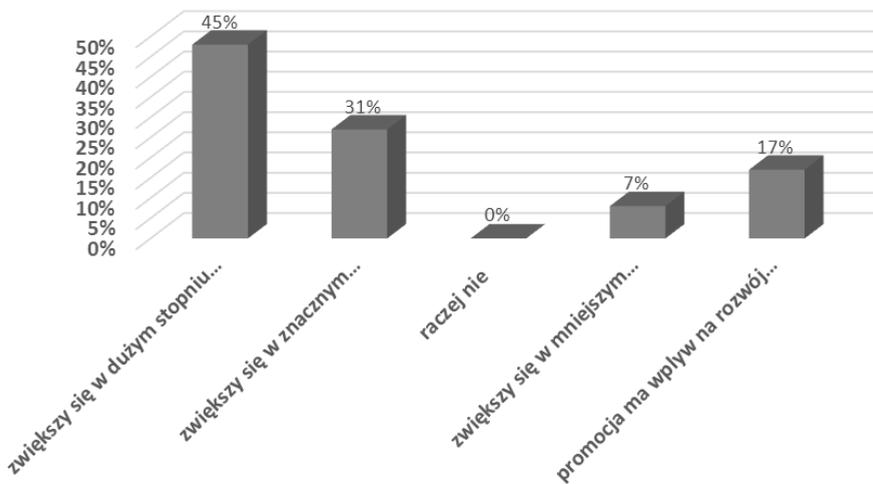


Fig. 4. The impact of angling on the development of agritourism services  
Source: the study based on surveys.

It is important, however, what anglers are guided by in choosing an agritourism farm and to what an extent they use agritourism services. The vast majority, 76% of them, selected a particular farm because of the close proximity to the body of water (Figure 5).

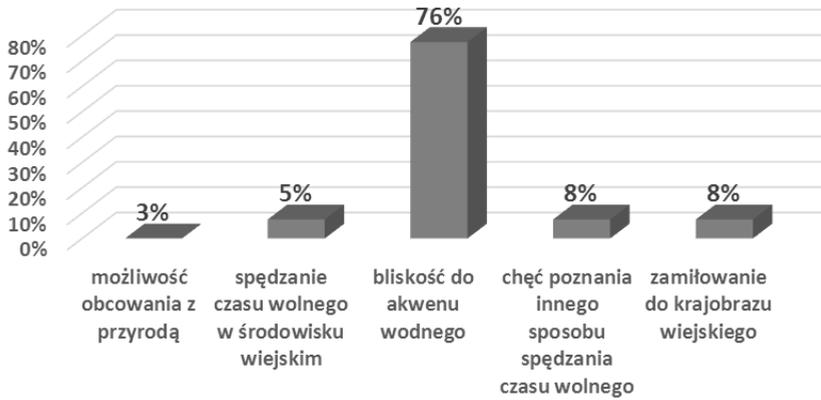


Fig. 5. Motives for choosing a farm where to spend holidays or time off

Source: the study prepared on the basis of surveys.

Other motives, such as desire to explore other ways of spending free time, passion for the countryside, spending leisure time in the rural environment, and the ability to commune with nature do not have a great significance.

Taking into account the type of service, it should be emphasized that the vast majority of anglers use the services of accommodation and catering, that is 78% of the respondents, while 17% of them mentioned using fishing equipment, and 5% chose transport (Figure 6).

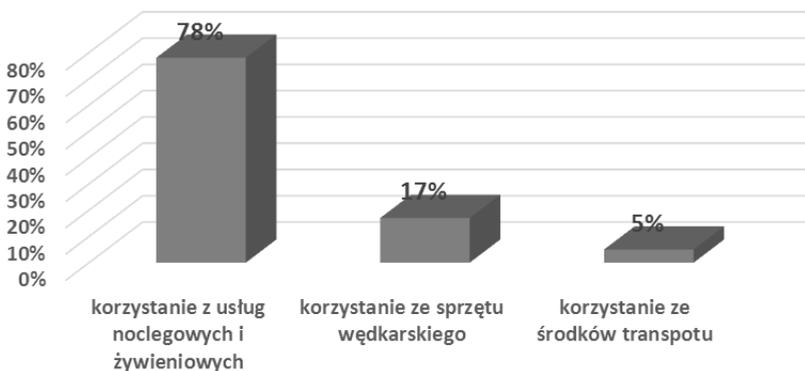


Fig. 6. Types of services enjoyed by anglers who stay on agritourism farms

Source: the study prepared on the basis of surveys.

One of the most important marketing activities in agritourism is the promotion.<sup>9</sup> It decides about the success of agritourism farm and the amount of money earned. The results of the research on the importance of promoting in the development of fishing on agritourism farms are shown in Figure 7.

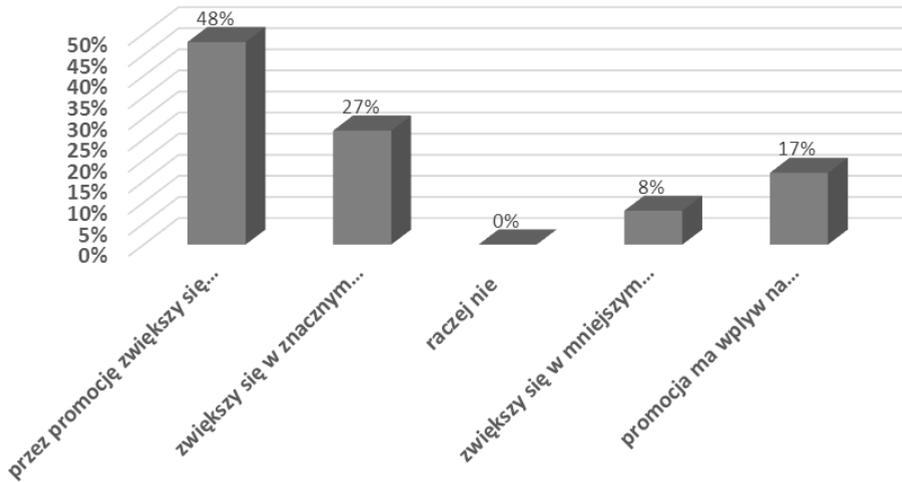


Fig. 7. The importance of promoting the development of angling on an agritourism farm  
Source: the study prepared on the basis of surveys.

The studies have shown that promotion significantly affects the development of fishing on an agritourism farm. 48% of the respondents were of such an opinion, while 27% of them stated that promoting will help the development of fishing, 17% those who took part in the survey believed that promotion is a necessary action, and 8% expressed their view that promotion will have rather little impact on the development of fishing in selected farms. There was no one among the respondents who stated that promotion has no effect on the development of angling on a farm.

<sup>9</sup> K. Michałowski, M. Jalinik, *Wpływ promocji i informacji na rozwój agroturystyki*, w: *Informacja i promocja w turystyce*, K. Michałowski (ed.), Białystok 2002, p. 66.

## **Conclusion**

Podlasie province is among the provinces with the biggest number of agritourism farms in Poland. The favorable natural conditions and the fact that the region is less urbanized allow for the development of angling. Agritourism, especially those that are located near some bodies of water and have the ability to provide services throughout the year, can also provide accommodation for anglers.

Fishing in the border counties of Podlasie province has favorable conditions for development. Numerous rivers, artificial lakes and ponds, and above all not yet fully fished stocks provide an opportunity for the dynamic development of agritourism farms. The introduction of an angling offer by the service providers will certainly increase the attractiveness of farms and serve as an incentive which will attract tourists all year round. Anglers are a group of people who accept peace and tranquility, but most of all love the beauty of nature and the countryside.

It can be concluded that existing agritourism farms are still poorly prepared to host anglers. They mainly limit their offer to renting of modest water sports equipment and fishing tackle. In that context, however, rentals of professional fishing equipment are necessary, and it is important to provide guiding services or providing information about the attractive fishing spots.

The fishing offer of agritourism farms is vague and poorly publicized. Most often it is limited to mere information on a website, but there is a lack of comprehensive information.

Siemianówka artificial lake, the rivers Narew, Bug, Biebrza and Supraśl are abundant in different species of fish. According to the respondents fish stocks in the present state are satisfactory, despite rampant poaching that is present in different forms, and the lack of fish translates into lack of anglers in areas of water.

Agritourism farms located near water bodies have an easier task and do not have to pay large financial outlays to restock their ponds as the responsibility for the protection of fish stocks falls on the Polish Angling Association.

In conclusion, it should be noted that angling has a high chance to develop on an agritourism farm and it is an important factor that can significantly improve the attractiveness and competitiveness of agritourism farms, and thus improve the family budget.

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## ROZWÓJ TURYSTYKI WĘDKARSKIEJ W WYBRANYCH GOSPODARSTWACH AGROTURYSTYCZNYCH WOJEWÓDZTWA PODLASKIEGO

### Streszczenie

Turystyka wędkarska ma wielu zwolenników. Turyści swój pobyt opierają głównie na akwenach wodnych, a miejscem zakwaterowania stały się gospodarstwa agroturystyczne. Wędkarze chętnie korzystają z usług noclegowych i częściowo żywieniowych. Na bazie turystyki wędkarskiej jest duża szansa rozwoju gospodarstw agroturystycznych. Dobrym przykładem stały się wybrane gospodarstwa agroturystyczne województwa podlaskiego. Badania wykazały, że turystyka wędkarska wpływa na atrakcyjność gospodarstw, ich dochodowość i stąd też warto podjąć działania usprawniające jej rozwój.

**Słowa kluczowe:** turystyka wędkarska, wędkarstwo, agroturystyka, gospodarstwa agroturystyczne