

Description of the column variables in 'Mlifehist_20150731.xls', the dataset used in Then et al. (2015)*

Column Variables	Description	Unit
Order	Scientific order of stock (most updated taxonomic nomenclature according to Catalog of Fishes, FAO, Fishes of the World (Nelson), World Register of Marine Species (www.marinespecies.org) and other suitable scientific references	na
Family	Scientific family name of stock (see description for the Order column)	na
CommonName	Commonly used name(s) of the stock	na
Genus	Genus name of the stock (see description for the Order column)	na
Species	Species name of the stock (see description for the Order column)	na
SubSpecies	Sub-species name of the stock (see description for the Order column); na if not applicable	na
SpecificLocation	The specific locality of the stock in which the mortality or growth study was conducted	na
Sex	Sex of the stock of concern with regard to the reported <i>M</i> estimate; m for Male, f for Female, c for Combined	na
M	Instantaneous natural mortality (<i>M</i>) rate as reported in the literature or estimated using available data.	yr ⁻¹
Mref	The original source of the <i>M</i> estimate. If the <i>M</i> estimate is a new estimate made based on published data, the data source is marked with *. If the new <i>M</i> estimate is obtained based on unpublished data, the data source is acknowledged	na
K	The von Bertalanffy (VB) growth parameter, reported from the standard VB curve (of the form $L_t = L_\infty(1 - \exp(-K(t - t_0)))$) where possible	yr ⁻¹
Linf	The von Bertalanffy asymptotic length, reported from the standard VB curve where possible. Total length (TL) is preferred when multiple length types are reported	mm
GrowthRef	The original source of the growth (von Bertalanffy <i>K</i> and <i>L</i> _∞ estimates)	na
tmax	The reported maximum age (<i>t</i> _{max}) of the stock specific to the location	yr
tmaxRef	The original source of the <i>t</i> _{max} estimate	na
Temp	Estimate of the mean annual water temperature at the location where the stock occurs. For cold adapted fishes (generally stocks with water temperature < 4°C), reported temperature will be converted to the "physiologically effective temperature" (according to Figure 1 in Pauly (1980)	°C

*Then, A. Y., J. M. Hoenig, N. G. Hall, and D. A. Hewitt. 2015. Evaluating the predictive performance of empirical estimators of natural mortality rate using information on over 200 fish species. ICES Journal of Marine Science 72:82–92.