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Fish Swimming in a Kármán Vortex Street

Liao, James C.; Akanyeti, Otar

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tel: +44 1970 62 2400 email: is@aber.ac.uk

1	FISH SWIMMING IN A KÁRMÁN VORTEX STREET: KINEMATICS, SENSORY
2	BIOLOGY AND ENERGETICS
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7	James C. Liao ¹ and Otar Akanyeti ²
8	¹ The Whitney Laboratory for Marine Bioscience
9	Department of Biology
10	University of Florida
11	9505 Ocean Shore Blvd, St. Augustine FL USA
12	² Department of Computer Science
13	Aberystwyth University
14	Aberystwyth, Ceredigion SY23 3FL, UK
15	
16	
17	
18	
19	Phone: 904-461-4011
20	Fax: 904-461-4052
21	E-mail: jliao@whitney.ufl.edu
22	
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24	

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Abstract

27 Fishes often live in environments characterized by complex flows. To study the 28 mechanisms of how fishes interact with unsteady flows, the periodic shedding of vortices behind 29 cylinders has been employed to great effect. In particular, fishes that hold station in a vortex 30 street (i.e. Kármán gaiting) show swimming kinematics that are distinct from their patterns of 31 motion during freestream swimming in uniform flows, although both behaviors can be modelled 32 as an undulatory body wave. Kármán gait kinematics are largely preserved across flow 33 velocities. Larger fish have a shorter body wavelength and slower body wave speed than smaller 34 fish, in contrast to freestream swimming where body wavelength and wave speed increases with 35 size. The opportunity for Kármán gaiting only occurs under specific conditions of flow velocity 36 and depends on the length of the fish; this is reflected in the highest probability of Kármán 37 gaiting at intermediate flow velocities. Fish typically Kármán gait in a region of the cylinder 38 wake where the velocity deficit is about 40% of the nominal flow. The lateral line plays a role in 39 tuning the kinematics of the Kármán gait, since blocking it leads to aberrant kinematics. Vision 40 allows fish to maintain a consistent position relative to the cylinder. In the dark, fish do not show 41 the same preference to hold station behind a cylinder though Kármán gait kinematics are the 42 same. When oxygen consumption level is measured, it reveals that Kármán gaiting represents 43 about half of the cost of swimming in the freestream.

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Introduction

46 Understanding how fishes swim in unsteady flows has attracted attention from many
47 disciplines, ranging from biologists interested in fish ecology to engineers working on the

48	principles of efficient propulsion ¹⁻⁵ . Because the hydrodynamics of a cylinder wake is well-
49	characterized ⁶ , examining how fish interact with cylinder vortices has provided a tractable way
50	to begin to understand fish-fluid interactions under complex, yet predictable flow conditions ⁷⁻⁹ .
51	This is because the relationships between flow velocity, cylinder diameter, and vortex shedding
52	frequency are already known. Flow moving past the cylinder creates vortices that shed
53	alternately from each side of the cylinder, with the vortices staggered as two columnar arrays 6,10 .
54	For Reynolds numbers of $40 - 100,000$ in which many fishes swim, the Strouhal number (St) for
55	cylinders is 0.2, where f is the vortex shedding frequency, d is the diameter of the cylinder, and U
56	is the nominal flow velocity.
57	
58	$St = \frac{fd}{U} \tag{1}$
59	
60	The spacing of the vortices, or wake wavelength (λ) can be calculated from the flow velocity
61	divided by the vortex shedding frequency.
62	
63	$\lambda = U/f$ (2)
64	
65	This enables experimenters the ability to control the frequency and spacing of vortices by
66	altering the flow speed and cylinder size, and has provided a unique opportunity to study how
67	fish behave in an unsteady, periodic environment.
68	Previous studies revealed that fishes adopt novel body kinematics behind a cylinder,
69	termed the Kármán gait. Kármán gaiting can save energy for station holding fishes, and occurs
70	under certain conditions of flow velocity, body length, and cylinder size ^{8,11-13} . To identify

Kármán gaiting, five criteria are used: 1) the fish is holding station and not drifting upstream or downstream, 2) there is a traveling wave along the body, 3) the body displays a large lateral displacement (> $\frac{1}{2}$ L), 4) the body posture adopts a long wavelength (>1 L), and 5) there are no transient small-amplitude, high-frequency tail beats.

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Body wave kinematics of Kármán gaiting versus freestream swimming

A travelling wave along the body can describe both freestream swimming and Kármán gaiting kinematics for subcarangiform swimming fishes. This equation, with an arbitrary initial phase (ϕ), takes the form:

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$$h(x,t) = A(x) * \sin\left(\frac{2\pi}{\lambda}x - 2\pi ft + \phi\right)$$
(3)

82

83 where *t* and *x* denote time and position along the body, respectively. The wave initiation point 84 varies with the locomotor mode (thunniform, carangiform, anguilliform), which is defined 85 according to how much of the body participates in the undulatory wave ¹⁴. Tail beat frequency (*f*) 86 and body wavelength (λ) define the temporal and spatial periodicity of the equation. The speed of 87 the travelling wave (*V*) is defined by

88

$$89 V = \lambda f (4)$$

90

91 The amplitude envelope (A(x)) also depends on the locomotor mode. For subcarangiform 92 swimmers such as rainbow trout and mackerel, it is described by a second order polynomial 93 $A(x) = c_1 x + c_2 x^{2}$ ¹⁵.

94 Whether the travelling wave is generated actively through muscular activity or passively 95 due to flow-induced motions varies depending on the flow regime. In freestream swimming, an antero-posterior wave of red muscle activity drives the propagation of the wave ¹⁶. In contrast, 96 97 during Kármán gaiting undulatory waves are generated passively as a result of lateral acceleration while the fish is being buffeted from side to side by the fluid ⁸. Several findings 98 99 support this argument. First, muscle recordings indicate that Kármán gaiting fish activate only the anterior red axial muscles ¹². Second, dead trout temporarily generate a mechanical wave 100 similar to live fish ¹⁷. Third, there is a high correlation between the lateral acceleration and tail 101 102 beat amplitude of the fish.

103 Freestream swimming and Kármán gaiting differ in that they are separated in the 104 parameter space; the amplitude, wavelength and frequency values of the travelling wave equation are substantially different for each behavior ¹⁸. During Kármán gaiting, the wave is 105 106 initiated at the body centre, which is 0.2 L (where L = total body length) further down the body 107 compared to the initiation point in freestream swimming. Fourier analysis on the motions of a 108 dead trout towed behind a cylinder shows that in a completely passive body, the wave starts at 109 the base of the cranium similar to freestream swimming (Fig. 1). This suggests that the location 110 of the wave initiation point during Kármán gaiting is not due to the passive fish-fluid 111 interactions. When live fish Kármán gait they activate their anterior muscles in order to adopt a 112 straight posture in the mid-body region; as a result this arrangement changes the location of the 113 initiation point. In this way, the interaction between fish and fluid in the mid-body region is more 114 critical than the posterior region. Fish appear to keep the mid-body region from bending in order 115 to provide a local axial control surface to harness the appropriate fluid forces. In addition to

undulation, Kármán gaiting fish also exhibit substantial lateral translations and body rotations,which can constitute up to 75% of the behavior.

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Body wave speed increases with flow speed

Kármán gaiting fish respond to increasing flow speed by increasing the speed of their traveling body wave. To do so, fish increase tail-beat frequency while keeping body wavelength and amplitude constant. Why does tail-beat frequency change and not body wavelength? Kármán gaiting is a flow-dominated behavior, where cylinder wake wavelength and vortex shedding frequency drives the body wavelength and tail-beat frequency. The cylinder vortex shedding frequency, but not wavelength, increases with flow speed, setting up a condition where the body wavelength is preserved across flow speed.

127 Experiments have shown that even a rigid foil positioned in a vortex street can generate thrust ¹⁷. What, then, is the role of the traveling wave in Kármán gait? In uniform flow, the ratio 128 129 of the traveling wave to the forward body speed (i.e. slip) approaches unity when swimming is 130 efficient because more momentum is directed towards forward thrust. This concept is less useful 131 in a vortex street environment, where the contributions of passive versus powered thrust 132 generation are harder to differentiate. The traveling wave is not entirely passive, given that 133 across flow velocities body wave speed is consistently 25% greater than the speed of the vortices drifting at the nominal flow speed ¹⁹. 134

135

The effect of fish length on body wavelength

Fish relate to the vortex street in different ways depending on their body length. Kármán gaiting fish require cylinder-to-body length ratios that range from 1:2 to 1:4 ^{11,19}. The body wavelength of the fish affects its ability to properly interact with vortices to produce thrust. In

139 order to Kármán gait, small fish interact differently with cylinder vortices than larger fish. When 140 small fish Kármán gait, they have a longer body wavelength than larger fish, reflecting the 141 relatively larger size and spacing of the cylinder vortices. Hypothetically, a larger fish may be 142 able to adopt a shorter wavelength because the body spans to interact with two successive 143 vortices, while a smaller fish must adopt a longer wavelength because its body can only interact 144 with one vortex. This is the opposite of what is found in freestream swimming, where body wavelength increases with fish size ²⁰. As mention above, during the Kármán gait less of the 145 146 body participates in the traveling wave than observed for freestream swimming. Therefore, a 147 longer body length does not correspond to a longer body wavelength as it seems to do for 148 freestream swimming (Fig. 4).

Regardless of body size, Kármán gaiting fish possess a body wavelength that is longer than the wake wavelength at intermediate flow speeds. This relationship seems critical to hold station and likely orients the body to create more thrust-generating interactions with passing vortices.

153

Probability of Kármán gaiting depends on flow speed

154 One of the most important factors determining how often fish prefer to Kármán gait is the 155 nominal flow speed to which the cylinder is exposed. Figure 2 shows that the highest probability of Kármán gaiting occurs at intermediate flow speeds between 2-5 body lengths per second ¹⁹. 156 157 The body center of the fish is typically located 4-6 cylinder diameters downstream from the 158 cylinder regardless of flow velocity level (Fig. 3A). This region corresponded to a velocity 159 deficit of about 40% of the nominal velocity (Fig. 3B). At low flow velocities fish did not 160 Kármán gait often and their motions resembled freestream swimming. This is because vortical flows must be sufficiently developed before fish can exploit them ^{8,11-13}. Kinematic results 161

162	support this interpretation; at lower flow speeds the tail-beat frequency was considerably higher
163	than the vortex shedding frequency ¹⁹ . The tail-beat frequency at the low flow speed was identical
164	to that of a freestream swimming fish ²⁰ . Furthermore, body wavelength and tail-beat amplitude
165	were very similar to those found in freestream swimming fish. At the highest speeds, trout do not
166	hold station continuously and are either drawn upstream into the suction zone behind the
167	cylinder, or ejected laterally from the vortex street. Under these higher Reynolds number flow
168	conditions the wake can adopt complex, three-dimensional vortex dynamics such as braid
169	vortices and other hydrodynamic instabilities ²¹ . Merging and pairing between initial shear layer
170	vortices can give rise to secondary structures that contribute to irregular vortex shedding
171	frequencies and amplitudes ^{6,22} . The resulting turbulent vortex street exceeds the stabilization
172	abilities of fishes.
173	
174	Sensory feedback during the Kármán gait
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output accordingly in turbulent flows. The greater variability in body wavelength for trout with a 185 186 blocked vs. intact lateral line underscores the importance of detecting local flow along the body 187 in adjusting Kármán gait kinematics to maintain a favorable posture to facilitate vortex capture. 188 In addition, trout with a blocked lateral line hold station further downstream from the cylinder 189 than fish with an intact lateral line. These lines of evidence reiterate that a proportion of Kármán 190 gait kinematics are under active control and are not the sole result of passive buffeting of the 191 body by vortices. Longer body wavelength and faster wave speed suggest that Kármán gaiting is 192 less efficient or more energetically costly without a functional lateral line. The fact that trout in 193 the light with a blocked lateral line do not spend as much time Kármán gaiting as trout with a 194 functional lateral line (Fig. 5) provides behavioral evidence in support of this hypothesis. 195 Whether altered Kármán gait kinematics reflect muscle activity and changes in energy 196 expenditure for the individual is currently not known. When lateral line functionality is held 197 constant (i.e. within fish with an intact or blocked lateral line), the presence or absence of light 198 does not change Kármán gait kinematics. This provides further evidence that when trout hold 199 station in a vortex street the lateral line, rather than vision, plays a larger role in body kinematics. 200 One exception occurs where vision alone can alter Kármán gait kinematics. Fish with a 201 blocked lateral line in the dark have a greater variability in body wavelength than fish in the 202 light. These fish seem to have more difficulty exploiting vortices, often drifting position within 203 the vortex street, displaying "corrective" motions, or switching to traditional undulatory 204 swimming such as seen in uniform flow. Vision allows fish to maintain a consistent position 205 relative to the cylinder. This may minimize the exposure to flow variation and thus variation in 206 body wavelength, since the predictability and energy of the vortices decreases with downstream 207 distance from the cylinder.

Energetics of Kármán gaiting

209	The cost of Kármán gaiting can be measuring directly and non-invasively in live fishes
210	by employing the technique of respirometry, which measures the oxygen consumed during a
211	particular behavior. There are several regions around a cylinder that fish choose to hold station.
212	Figure 6 illustrates that for a given flow speed, oxygen consumption during Kármán gaiting is
213	higher than entraining near the suction region, but lower than bow waking in the front of the
214	cylinder ¹³ . Kármán gaiting represents about half of the cost (47%) of swimming in the
215	freestream away from the cylinder. When compared to freestream swimming in flow equivalent
216	to the reduced velocity behind the cylinder (which is about 40% of the nominal flow velocity),
217	Kármán gaiting represents about 79% of the cost ¹¹ . Therefore, by exploiting vortices Kármán
218	gaiting fish used significantly less oxygen than predicted if there were only benefiting from
219	swimming in the reduced velocity of the cylinder wake.

220

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Future directions

222 Our work on the midline kinematics of Kármán gaiting, sensory biology and energetics 223 can be used by roboticists to develop control algorithms that can move bio-inspired robots and 224 by computational fluid dynamics modelers to simulate fluid-structure interactions. Given that the 225 majority of the body waves during Kármán gaiting are generated passively, it is more important 226 for a flexible robot to control its head and the anterior body than control its posterior body. If 227 hydrodynamic forces are harnessed appropriately at the anterior body, a travelling wave is 228 generated passively at the posterior body starting from the body centre. This represents a 229 paradigm shift in the field of autonomous robotics locomotion which traditionally emphasize the control of the posterior body ³⁰⁻³². What Kármán gaiting studies teach us is that head control is 230

critical for steering and improving stability in unsteady flows by counter-balancing body
rotations and lateral translation, and that control functionality can be outsourced to the viscoelastic properties of the body itself.

234 The study of biological locomotion in unsteady flow regimes is a promising one that 235 stands to shed light on new mechanisms of hydrodynamic propulsion. Though vortex streets 236 generated by cylinders has proven to be a production experimental system, overall the responses 237 of fishes to unsteady flows remains largely unexplored. Around a single cylinder, already three 238 distinct energy-saving behaviors are observed. What if the wakes behind three-dimensional 239 objects, arranged in aggregations, or varying in flexibility, were investigated in more species? It 240 is apparent that the diversity of maneuvering, wake-exploitation and drag-reduction behaviors 241 would reflect the inexhaustible number of scenarios between over 33,000 species of fishes and 242 unsteady flow conditions. Along this vein, experiments into more natural flow conditions stand 243 to be well rewarded. For example, investigating the behavior of fish holding station behind two 244 cylinders in tandem, only a slightly more involved experiment than a single cylinder but closer to 245 mimicking flows from more natural object aggregations such as large woody debris in streams, 246 already reveals new principles of fluid-solid interactions and wake exploitation that could not be predicted ³³. Another promising topic is the investigation of how fishes navigate waves in the 247 248 surf zone during foraging. With the application of Digital Particle Image Velocimetry, high 249 speed videography and physiological techniques such as respirometry and electromyography, 250 new insights into the mechanisms of fish locomotion are now more accessible to marine 251 technology applications.

252

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258	
259	

Figures

























Figure Legends

295

296 Fig. 1. Fourier analysis of a dead trout midline kinematics while in the vortex street (L = 17.8cm, flow speed = 57 cms⁻¹ and cylinder diameter = 5 cm¹⁷). (A) Normalized frequency spectrum 297 298 (black = frequency with smallest lateral amplitude and white = largest amplitude) revealed that 299 the dominant frequency is 2.20±0.10 Hz, similar to a live Kármán gaiting trout (A_i). (B) Mean 300 amplitude curve (solid line) across 6 tail beat cycles (gray shaded area shows \pm standard error of 301 the mean) indicated that body amplitudes of dead trout were smaller than those of live trout (B_i). 302 (C) Increasing phase lag from head to tail in the mean phase curve (solid line, gray shaded area 303 shows \pm standard error of the mean) indicated that the travelling wave along the body was 304 initiated more anteriorly than in a live trout (C_i). This suggests that live fish actively control the 305 anterior body to prevent wave formation. (Aii) Normalized frequency spectrum shows both freestream swimming and Kármán gaiting fish ($L = 10.0 \pm 0.3$ cm) at 4.5 Ls⁻¹ exhibited periodic 306 307 lateral oscillations, where the dominant frequency was 6.6±0.1 Hz and 2.2±0.05 Hz, 308 respectively. (B_{ii}) Mean amplitude curves (solid line) at dominant frequency (gray shaded area 309 shows \pm standard error of the mean). In both behaviours, the amplitude of lateral oscillations was 310 smallest at the mid-body region and increased gradually towards tail. During Kármán gaiting, 311 body amplitudes at all locations were larger than during freestream swimming. (C_{ii}) Mean phase 312 curves (solid line) at dominant frequency (gray shaded area shows \pm standard error of the mean). 313 A travelling wave was evident for both behaviours. In Kármán gaiting, the wave started at the 314 body centre (0.4 L), which was about 0.2 L posterior to the starting point of freestream 315 swimming fish. In both behaviours, the wave speed was constant along the posterior body (~60 cms⁻¹ for freestream swimming and ~75 cms⁻¹ for Kármán gaiting fish). The freestream 316

swimming amplitude and phase curves of trout are very similar to those of saithe and mackerel
 presented in ¹⁵.

319

Fig. 2. The probability of Kármán gaiting changes with flow speed. Fish Kármán gait the most at intermediate flow speeds (\sim 30 - 70 cm s⁻¹ for trout with total body length of 15.7 ± 0.8 cm) and the least at extreme speeds. Videos were binned into 5 flow speed categories, where each category consisted of a minimum of 50 videos from at least 5 different fish.

324

325 Fig. 3. (A) Location of the body centre (BC, black circles) of the body relative to the D-cylinder 326 for all trials. The x and y axes show the downstream and lateral position, respectively, where 0 327 corresponds to the cylinder axis. (B) Downstream position of the BC relative to the cylinder as 328 flow velocity increases. The BC positions are superimposed on a heat map illustrating the 329 magnitude of the velocity deficit behind the cylinder as a percentage of the freestream velocity, 330 where red represents the greatest relative flow reduction. The location of greatest flow reduction 331 remains in a consistent region downstream of the cylinder across most flow speeds. Note that this 332 plot does not distinguish the reversal in flow direction that is established in the suction region 333 directly behind the cylinder. At the lowest speed, flow reduction can equate to no flow (100% 334 reduction), whereas at higher speeds the largest flow reduction still results in some flow 335 magnitude.

336

Fig. 4. Body wavelength across speed and body size. (A) Body wavelength (solid line) starts lower than the cylinder wake wavelength (dashed line) and then rises above as flow speed increases ($r^2 = 0.28$, n = 9 fish). At the lowest swimming speeds, the absence of a strong vortex

street likely requires use of a shorter body wave similar to freestream swimming fish (see text). (B) At a flow speed of ~50 cm s⁻¹, smaller fish have a longer body wavelength than larger fish (p< 0.05, n = 15 fish). Values shown are the mean ± S.E.M.

343

344 Fig. 5. Regions around a cylinder in flow that trout will either entrain or Kármán gait (defined as 345 two rectangular regions on either side of the cylinder, 7x15 cm, or a single rectangle centered 346 along the midline of the cylinder wake, 10x15cm, respectively). In the light, fish prefer to 347 Kármán gait in the vortex street downstream from the cylinder (black fill) for the majority of the 348 time during a 60-minute experiment, especially when the lateral line is intact $(V+L+_1)$. Values 349 for fish in the light with an intact lateral line exposed to the cylinder for two consecutive days 350 $(V+L+_2)$ are almost identical to those exposed for one day $(V+L+_1)$, indicating that previous 351 experience in the flow tank does not alter the preference to Kármán gait. In contrast to 352 experiments performed in the light, fish in the dark do not spend much time in the vortex street 353 regardless of lateral line functionality (V-L+1 or V-L-2), preferring to entrain (gray fill) just 354 downstream and to the side of the cylinder. The time that fish spent exploring other regions of 355 the flow tank (white) is similar across treatments.

356

Fig. 6. Statistical comparison of MO₂ values between Kármán gaiting (KG) and other behaviors at $3.5 L s^{-1}$. Compared to other behaviors at $3.5 L s^{-1}$, Kármán gaiting requires significantly less oxygen than swimming in the free stream (FS, 47%) and bow waking (BW, 73%), but requires more oxygen than entraining (EN, 116%). Kármán gaiting fish use less oxygen (79%) compared to fish swimming in the free stream at $1.8 L s^{-1}$ (asterisk). Values are reported as the mean \pm the standard error.

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