

**SOME ECOLOGICAL ASPECTS OF THE EDIBLE
OYSTER *CRASSOSTREA CUCULLATA* (BORN) OCCUR-
RING IN THE NEGOMBO LAGOON**

L. Pinto & S. Wignarajah

*(Department of Zoology, University of Sri Lanka,
Colombo Campus)*

A population of oysters associated with mangroves of an islet in the Negombo Lagoon was studied during the period August, 1976 to September, 1977. The study covered the environmental factors such as rainfall, air and water temperatures,

salinity, dissolved oxygen, pH and the number and sizes of oysters, their vertical distribution and distribution around the islet and the fauna associated with them. It was observed that rainfall and dissolved oxygen were highest during the inter-monsoonal periods. Salinity ranged from 0.7% to 36.0%.

Twenty four species of animals were found on and around the oyster population which included nine species of molluscs, ten species of crustaceans, three species of polychaetes, a sponge and a gobioid fish. The number of juvenile oysters was found to be highest during April 1977, though young oysters were also found in small numbers throughout the year. The number of dead oysters was highest in June 1977, and it appears that decrease in mean water level may be the cause for mortality. The largest number of living oysters was observed in April 1977. The oyster population was confined to the southern end of the islet and this may be related to the silt content and to the presence of mature *Rhizophora mucronata*. A vertical zonation of animals on the roots of *R. mucronata* was observed, which was broadly parallel to zonation described for rocky shores.