

**STUDIES OF GROWTH - RATES AND DISTRIBUTION OF *METAPENAEUS ENSIS* (DE HAAN)
IN THE BOLGODA LAGOON, SRI LANKA**

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Commercial prawn catches of *Metapenaeus ensis* in the Bolgoda lagoon were sampled from October 1979. These samples indicated the presence of juvenile prawns in January and in June of 1980. This demonstrated that *M. ensis* spawns twice during the year. The females reach maturity when their carapace lengths are about 2.0 cm-2.5 cm and the males when their carapace lengths are 1.5 cm-1.6 cm. At maturity the females were about three to four months old and the males were two to three months old.

Growth parameters were calculated using von Bertalanffy equation ($L_t = \infty L [1 - e^{-k(t-t_0)}]$). All sizes of *M. ensis* were more abundant in the interior of the lagoon than close to the mouth. Small, newly recruited juveniles were never found at the mouth of the lagoon. The sex ratio showed considerable variation from the mouth of the lagoon to the interior of the lagoon indicating their migratory patterns.