

**STUDIES ON INTERACTION AMONGST YOUNG STAGES
OF *SAROTHERODON NILOTICUS***

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In hatchery production of *S. niloticus* different size categories of fry and fingerlings usually exist together. The present study was conducted with a view to assessing the nature and extent of interaction amongst them, especially incidences of attack and/or predation.

SECTION D

Two sizes of fry (>10 mm and 10-15 mm) were used as prey and five sizes of fry/fingerlings were used as predators. Trials were conducted in duplicate. Fish were observed continuously for 8 h and again at the end of 24 h. Observations were recorded in relation to (a) schooling (b) nipping attacks (c) swallowing of prey.

When prey and predators were of approximately equal size neither aggressive interactions nor separate schooling was observed. Predators of 15-20 and 20-25 mm attacked prey >10 mm nipping them off and on. Weakened prey were killed off within 6-8 hours but not swallowed. Predators of 25-30 mm and 30-35 mm attacked prey of both size groups and swallowed them. Prey were consumed within a period of 2 h. Prey were observed to move in very tight schools in this case.

It would appear that considerable loss of fry could be expected in hatchery systems in which different size groups are freely mixed.