THE OCCURRENCE OF DECAPOD CRUSTACEANS ASSOCIATED WITH SEAGRASSES AND MANGROVES IN THE NEGOMBO LAGOON

N.N. Punchihewa and L. Pinto
Dept. of Zoology, Open University, Nawala

In a study that lasted for two years, eight species of crabs and twelve species of prawns were identified from the seagrasses and mangroves of the Negombo Lagoon. Scylla serrata and Portunus pelagicus dominated the crabs and Penaeus indicus and Metapenacus dobsoni dominated prawns.

P. indicus and Macrobrachium spp. were abundant in the mangroves while Alpheus sp., M.moyebi and M. elegans were abundant in the seagrasses. All crabs listed occurred in higher densities in seagrasses than in the mangroves except Thalamita crenata.

Somewhat similar to the observation of Samarakoon and Raphael (1972) in the Negombo Lagoon the prawn catch in the mangroves and seagrasses was high towards the end of south west monsoon in September. S.serrata occurred throughout the year with a minor peak during this season. P. pelagicus was abundant during the north east monsoon and showed a clear seasonality as observed earlier (Punchihewa & Pinto 1987).

Seagrasses yielded a higher number and biomass of crustaceans than the mangroves.

References:

Punchihewa, N.N. & Pinto L. (1987) Periodicity in the occurrence of the edible sea crab, Portunus pelagicus Linn. in the seagrasses of the Negombo Lagoon. Proc. Sri Lanka Ass. Adv. Sc. 43rd Ann.Sess. (Abstracts) p 150.

Samarakoon, J.I. & Raphael Y.I. (1972) on the availability of seed of culturable shrimps in the Negombo, Lagoon. In coastal aquaculture in Indo-Pacific Region. edited by T.V.R. Pillay, Surrey Fishing News Books.

This project was funded by NARESA research grant RG/86/B/10.