

SETTLEMENT OF SPAT OF THE EDIBLE OYSTER  
CRASSOSTREA CUCULATA IN NEGOMBO LAGOON

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The edible oyster, Crassostres cuculata, occurs naturally on roots of Rhizophora mucronata in Negombo lagoon. It is an edible culturable species being successfully cultured commercially in many countries. In Sri Lanka it is collected for consumption but not yet cultured. Culture of this oyster would depend on the availability of suitable spat. This study used biweekly-sampled spat collector (calicut tiles) suspended from the mangrove roots adjacent to natural populations to determine spat abundance and its temporal variation over a period of one year.

Spat was available maximally in January 1989 (settlement going upto 2390 spat/square meter). Thereafter, spat availability declined in February and in March to less than 100 spat/square meter. April (at upto 280 spat/sq.m), late November and December (upto 400 spat/sq.m.) recorded somewhat increased spat settlements while spat numbers declined from May to June and from August to September (with less than 100 spat/sq.m.).

The study shows that the edible oyster reproduces almost throughout the year, with spat being available in fluctuating numbers in most months.

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