

**D-30: Preliminary study on the food of *Monodactylus argenteus* in Negombo estuary.**

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The stomach contents of 817 *Monodactylus argenteus* juveniles ranging from 1 to 11 cm total length, were examined from March 1992 to March 1993. Fish were obtained from fishermen who capture this species in Negombo estuary for the aquarium fish trade. Each stomach was examined as a unit and the individual food organisms sorted and identified. Frequency of occurrence method was used to demonstrate organisms being fed upon and results were presented for every 50 mm length group.

Blue green algae, copepods and other small crustaceans were dominant in the stomach contents of all the length groups. Detritus were found in the fish above 4.00 cm. Scales of other big fishes were observed in the stomach contents of *M. argenteus* frequently indicating that this fish may feed on external invertebrate parasites of other fishes.

On the results of this study, juveniles of *M. argenteus* inhabiting Negombo estuary might be described as indiscriminate omnivores.

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