

**D-77: Food and feeding habits of *Puntius filamentosus* at Bolgoda Canal**

S K Mala Pathirana, J Jinadasa

*(Dept of Ecology, Univ of Sri Jayewardenepura, Nugegoda)*

*Puntius filamentosus* has been identified with 5 other species of *Puntius* among 33 species in Bolgoda Canal. The present study dealt with food and feeding habits of *P. filamentosus* in Bolgoda Canal in Bellanwila Attidiya marsh, which is a wild life sanctuary.

This study was carried out over a period of 6 months. An attempt was made to relate food habits to morphological features.

Fish samples were obtained twice a month from 3 locations in the canal (6°51'N, 79°54'E) by using a cast net.

Selected morphological attributes such as size of mouth, gap between two gill rakers, and gut length were correlated with food and feeding behaviour. The gills of *P. filamentosus* also helps in the selection of diet. The mean value for the gap between two gill rakers increased with size of the fish.

*P. filamentosus* were omnivorous and had guts two times longer than the size of the fish. The terminal position of the mouth was correlated with foraging behaviour on the fish in the water column.

Their diet contained filamentous and non-filamentous blue green algae, diatoms, invertebrate eggs, protozoans, rotifers, crustaceans. The major component of the diet was filamentous algae. But small sizes of *P. filamentosus* preferred to consume invertebrate eggs than filamentous algae. They fed mainly in the dusk and dawn.

The availability of the dietary components in the Canal also varied throughout the year. *P. filamentosus* changed their diet according to the availability of the source. Therefore food was not a significant factor for their survival in the canal but the environmental variables such as the rainfall and temperature were major factors for it.