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The pompano

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The pompano

Pompano is highly valued in Hong Kong, Singapore, and Taiwan. It is abundant in the Philippines from wild catch. Hatchery and growout methods have now been developed in Singapore and Taiwan because of the high demand in Asian markets. In Philippine markets, it sells for more that P120 per kg

By **MB Surtida**

The pompano *Trachinotus blochii* is a high-value fish by virtue of its tasty meat and appealing appearance. Fry production was started in 1989 in Taiwan. Since then, culture of pompano has been carried out continuously and profitably not only in Taiwan but in China and Singapore too. In the Philippines, the culture of pompano is not popular. Although literature points to the usual aquaculture management, no commercial operation is known, except for one corporation that has recently started to test its market after producing several crops for export with fry imported from Taiwan. This is not surprising because catch from the wild finds its way to the domestic market, thus its culture and market potential is virtually unexplored. Besides, its availability in the local market for everyday use does not yet label pompano as exclusively high-value as in other countries. This makes pompano culture a lucrative possibility especially when export is considered.

The following culture method is described from literature based in Taiwan as actual culture in the Philippines is not documented.

In 20-30 days, fry attains a total body lenght 2.5 cm that can be stocked in grow-out ponds, and in 7-12 months, attain market size of 400-600 g. Fry produced during summer are stocked directly into ponds but those produced in winter are stocked in the nursery for overwintering. After hatchery stage, grading is done to avoid growth disparity and cannibalistic behavior. Custom-sized sinking dry pellets are fed throughout the culture period because the pompano's pharynx is small and its feeding behavior is voracious. Although chopped trash fish can be given, it has been found that it causes increased growth difference among individual fish. Feeds can be made available to the fish by an automatic feeder one hour in the morning and one hour before sunset. Feed conversion ratio is 1.6-2.0:1.

Stocking density is 2-3 fish per m^2 and production is10-15 tons per ha per crop. Pompano is euryhaline and may be cultured in salinities of 3-33 ppt. Fish grow fast in salinities below 20 ppt and poorly in full seawater. Pompano are not tolerant of low temperature. Minimum water temperature for survival is 140^oC and when temperature drops for 2 days, mortality occurs.

The tiger shrimp *Penaeus monodon* has been found to be an effective water quality stabilizer in pompano ponds. Pompano ponds can be stocked with 60,000 tiger shrimp per ha because leftover feeds can be efficiently consumed, harvested with a trap net and becomes an additional aquaculture product 3-4 months after stocking.

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pens in a standard size to allow easy management.

The Badinotti mesh netting is used as culture and predator control nets, and has 22 cm mesh size. The nets are changed from black to white every year. The net is hung from the ring and can reach up to 17-18 m deep at its center.

The tuna are fed 25 kg blocks of frozen feed in the morning and fresh feed in the afternoon. Grow-out culture is 4-6 months.

The preferred market size is in excess of 30 kg with a fat score of at least 25%. The fish are taken by handlines and killed using a wire threaded up to the spinal column to destroy the nerves ("reaming"). Tuna are then gutted, and placed in an ice bath.

About 200 fish are harvested each day. Tuna are transported to the packaging facility, where they are packed in fresh ice. To maintain a low core temperature, bags of ice are also put into the gill cavity and the gut. Then, they are placed in polystyrene boxes, sealed, labeled and trucked for an air freight to Japan.

MG Kailis attributed their success to the support of local residents.

Tuna mariculture in Japan

In Japan, two companies -- Maruha and Nihon Haigo Shiryou -- have succeeded in spawning and hatching the tuna in captivity. Maruha has started their breeding experiments since 1986, and they succeeded in June 1991. More than 3.5 million eggs were obtained in 1992. They also succeeded in rearing tuna eggs for

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