PRESENT STATUS AND PROBLEMS OF
PRAWN CULTURE IN THE PHILIPPINES

by

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AREA AND SCOPE. The total area suitable for prawn culture
development in the Philippines is about 176,032.10 hectares
(bangos fishpond convertible to shrimp farm). About 400,890
hectares of brackishwater tidal coves, sheltered bays, and mangrove
swamps await possible (BFAR Statistics 1973) development.

Some of the known species of shrimp found in bangos fish-
ponds are: Penaeus merguiensis (hipon puti), P. monodon (sugpo),
P. semisulcatus and Metapenaeus monoceros (hipon suahi).

MANPOWER. Per information and statistics of the Bureau of
Fisheries and Aquatic Resources, the number of fishpond operators,
pond caretakers and other persons involved in fishpond operation
is about 176,000 people (based on 1 man/ha). The average rate
of annual increase of persons engaged in fishpond corresponds
to the increase of fishponds being developed.

FIELD AND PRODUCTION. The estimated total yield of ponds
from the natural production of shrimp is about 50 kg/ha/yr. How-
ever, enterprising bangos fishpond operators have been producing
about 500 kg/ha/yr of sugpo and other species of shrimps.

SOURCES OF SEEDS AND CULTURE METHODS. The seed stock comes
from the natural estuarine areas. These are carried by tidal
currents into the brackishwater and tidal rivers, streams and
creeks. Fry concessioners and catchers gather different sizes
of fry and juvenile stages of sugpo and shrimps. These are trans-
ported in plastic bag containers with oxygen and brought to fish-
pond centers.
The known sugpo fry fishing grounds are: Dasol Bay in Pangasinan, Ternate in Cavite, Balayan and Calatagan in Batangas, Calauag and Aloneros, Tagkawayan in Quezon Province, Iloilo City, Panguil Bay in Lanao del Norte, Sibuguey Bay in Zamboanga del Sur, and Zamboanga City.

The traditional method of rearing prawn in ponds is to gather the juvenile and fry stage from the estuarine areas. These are usually grown with Bangos, Samaral (Teuthis sp.) and/or Kitang (Scatophagus sp.). The stocking rate of sugpo ranges from 5,000 to 10,000 fry per hectare. They grow to marketable size (15-30 pcs/kg) in about 5 to 7 months in the rearing pond with lumot and/or lab-lab as food. Mortality rate ranges from 30 to 50% during the growing period. However, some fishpond operators claim 70-80% survival if ponds are properly managed while others may lose entirely their stock with negligible survival during the rainy season (nalolosao).

In a recent field test on the rate of growth of sugpo in brackishwater pond, thirty thousand (30,000) fry were stocked in a hectare compartment with fair growth of lab-lab and lumot. In addition 40,000 bangos fingerlings (30 mm-35 mm) were also reared in the same pond. After a month of rearing in the 1 hectare compartment a cut along the dike of an adjoining compartment (3 hectares) was undertaken. This increased the area of rearing to 4 hectares. In about 3 months growing period, 10 samples were measured (see Table 1). The maximum and minimum length and weight were 213 mm & 117 mm and 81.2 grams & 12.5 grams respectively and with an average weight of 41.84 gm. This preliminary field test was made to determine possible detailed study on the culture of sugpo in brackishwater pond.

The cost of sugpo fry ranges from ₱0.08 to ₱0.15 depending on the source and abundance of supply.

Marketable size sugpo costs ₱25.00 to ₱35.00/kg in the Manila markets and suburbs while hipon puti and hipon suahi cost ₱12-₱15/kg and ₱16-₱20/kg, respectively.
**PROBLEMS.** The problems confronting prawn culture development in the Philippines are similar to those of the countries developing shrimp culture, particularly in Southeast Asia as follows:

a) Meager information and expertise  
b) dearth of trained technical men (shrimp culturist) and  
c) timid flow and/or lack of financial resources.

It is sad to note that in spite of the favorable climate and environmental conditions mother nature has endowed to our country, no real shrimp culture project has been developed as yet. The SEARDEC Shrimp Research Project at Tigbauan, Iloilo and the MSU Shrimp Laboratory (with financial aid from NSDB) at Naawan, Misamis Oriental are the two institutions pioneering in the mass production of prawn fry. In addition, some private institutions are now engaged in research and field test on the commercial production of cultivable species of shrimp.
Table 1. Measurement of Sugpo (P. monodon) Reared in a Brackish-water Pond Near Ragay Gulf from August to November 10, 1974

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sample Number</th>
<th>Length (mm)</th>
<th>Depth (mm)</th>
<th>Weight (gm)</th>
<th>Sex</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>213</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>81.2</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>210</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>76.2</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
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<td>3</td>
<td>182</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>48.5</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
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<td>4</td>
<td>190</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>54.9</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>181</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>50.0</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>26.9</td>
<td>M</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>140</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>22.0</td>
<td>M</td>
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<td>8</td>
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<td>22.5</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>145</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>23.7</td>
<td>M</td>
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<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>117</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>12.5</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>1669</td>
<td>229</td>
<td>418.49</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Average</strong></td>
<td>166.8</td>
<td>22.9</td>
<td>41.849</td>
<td></td>
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</table>