

PLANKTON AND SELECTION BY SNAKEHEAD (*Channa striata*) FROM FRY TO FINGERLING STAGES

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Summary

The study was conducted in the snakehead (*Channa striata*) nursery ponds from day 0 to 30 of rearing period to investigate the development of plankton and determine food selection of snakehead fry during rearing period. Plankton composition and abundance in ponds were sampled daily during the first 10 days and every 3 other days until day 30. Fish specimens were also collected daily during the first 10 days with 30 individuals for determination of mouth size and feed composition in the digestive tract. The results showed that a total of 69 genera of microalgae was recorded belonging to 5 phylum including green algae (Chlorophyta), euglenoids (Euglenophyta), blue-green algae (Cyanobacteria), diatom (Bacillariophyta) and dinoflagellates (Dinophyta) with densities ranging from 22,991 – 144,088 individuals/L. Number of zooplankton species found was 95 belonging to Protozoa, Rotifera, Cladocera and Copepoda with the densities ranging from 542,524 – 2,104,859 individuals/m³. The food composition in the digestive tract of fish varied with time, with Nauplii and Rotifera at the first few days and replaced by Cladocera and Copepoda in the following days. In addition, organic matter was also found with high percentage from day 27. Microalgae was not encountered in the digestive tract during the whole study period.

Keywords: *Snakehead, phytoplankton, zooplankton, live food, nursery stage.*