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Larval rearing and early juvenile culture of the blue swimmer crab, *Portunus pelagicus*

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The blue swimmer crab, *Portunus pelagicus*, is a commercially important portunid species in many Indo-Pacific countries. Due to increasing market demands, there has been growing interest in aquaculture for the species in this region. Compared to other farmed portunid crab species, *P. pelagicus* has shorter larval duration and high larval survival rate as well as fast grow rate at early juvenile stages. This presentation will review research conducted in my laboratory to date on development of hatchery and early juvenile culture techniques for *P. pelagicus*, which includes broodstock management, devising optimal larval feeding regimens and identifying suitable physical conditions for larval rearing, as well as aspects of nursery culture of early juvenile crabs. It is hoped that this will aid the development of the newly emerging *P. pelagicus* aquaculture industry in the region.

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Counting crabs; the status of Global *Scylla* (mud crab) populations and their future management

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Factors controlling the size, vitality and current status of *Scylla* spp. (mud crab) are reviewed in this paper and their future conservation and management will be discussed. Key markets for mud crabs provide anecdotal information that the wild populations supplying them are increasingly characterised as having smaller average sizes and shrinking numbers. Whilst sustainable mud crab fisheries have been demonstrated to be possible, e.g. Australia, in most countries governments struggle to manage *Scylla* fisheries. Fishing of mud crabs is driven not only by demand, but also out of financial necessity. The growth of capture-based aquaculture of mud crabs has increased fishing pressure in many countries. A range of management tools are available for *Scylla* fisheries and techniques for monitoring their populations have improved, however the lack of resources for monitoring, control and surveillance (MCS) remains a major concern. The clearing of mangrove forests to produce coastal areas for real estate development, firewood or other needs has reduced their worldwide coverage. As these forests are the preferred habitat of *Scylla* spp. this has significantly reduced global carrying capacity for the four species of mud crabs. The high fecundity of *Scylla* spp., combined with periodic spikes in natural recruitment, linked to natural weather cycles, appears to explain in part their resilience to over fishing throughout their distribution. The growth in aquaculture of *Scylla* spp. provides optimism to meet the future market demand for crabs and it can be argued that stock enhancement can become another useful management tool, however the management and conservation of wild populations needs to be urgently addressed in many countries, if a valuable coastal fishery resource is not to be lost to many, often poor coastal communities.

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