

**THE FOOD AND FEEDING HABITS OF SELAROIDES
LEPTOLEPIS (CUVIER AND VALENCIENNES)**

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THE FOOD AND FEEDING HABITS OF *SELAROIDES LEPTOLEPIS*
(CUVIER AND VALENCIENNES) *

WITH a view to study the food and feeding habits of *Selaroides leptolepis*, a common carangid in Indian waters, stomachs of 1830 specimens collected from the Palk Bay and the Gulf of Mannar were analysed by the Points and Occurrence methods. Examination of the stomach contents of *S. leptolepis* at different stages indicated that *Acartia*, *Oithona*, Decapod and molluscan larvæ were favourite items of food in the lower size groups and as the fish grows *Lucifer*, *Acetes*, Mysids and fishes (mostly juvenile *Anchoviella*) became more and more important in the diet. Sometimes, however, the diet exclusively consisted of either *Lucifer*, or *Acetes*, or fishes Cypris larvæ, *Centropages*, *Pseudodiaptomus* and *Corycæus* were of rare occurrence in the lower size groups and altogether absent in the higher ones. Copepod eggs and Pteropod shells were recorded only for a short while. Filamentous algæ (*Hypnea*, *Sarconema*, and *Enteromorpha*) and diatoms (*Coscinodiscus*, *Rhabdonema*, *Leptocylindrus* and *Navicula*) constituted a small percentage of the food.

Besides examining samples from the Palk Bay and the Gulf of Mannar, specimens were

also obtained from Madras on the east coast and Vizhingam near Trivandrum on the west coast. *Lucifer* appendages, Mysids, *Acartia*, Decapod larvæ, *Labidocera*, molluscan larvæ, Pteropod shells and fishes were recorded from the Madras specimens whereas the stomachs were practically empty in the Vizhingam specimens.

The present investigations show that *S. leptolepis* is essentially a carnivorous fish, supplementing its food with plant material. This is more or less in conformity with the observations of Chacko (1949), Datar (1954), Kuthalingam (1955 b), Chacko and Mathew (1956) and Vijayaraghavan (1957) on the food of other carangids.

The details are being published elsewhere.

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