

**ON THE INFESTATION OF THE GONADIAL NEMATODE PARASITE
PHILOMETRA RAJANI MUKERJEE FROM THE SCIAENID FISH
PENNAHIA ANEUS (BLOCH) FROM PALK BAY**

Philometra rajani the gonadial nematode parasite was first described by Mukerjee (1966) from the ovaries of fishes *Polynemus polydactylus* and *Sciaena coiter*, but unfortunately the places from where these fishes were obtained are not given by the author. Annigiri (1961) recorded *Philometra* sp. from *Otolithus argenteus* and from his account it appears to be the same species described by Mukerjee. From Japan, Yamaguti (1961) recorded philometrids from the sciaenid fish *Sciaena schegeli*.

While examining the sciaenid fish *Pennahia aneus* (Bloch) from Mandapam and Pamban (Palk Bay) many specimens infested with *Philometra rajani* were observed. The occurrence of *Philometra rajani* in *P. aneus* has not been so far recorded.

The number of *Philometra rajani* infesting the ovaries of one fish varies from one to twenty-five worms ranging from 3.0 mm. to 80.0 mm. in length. In some cases the infestation is so acute that the whole ovary is occupied by the parasites rendering the ovary black. In such cases the destruction of the eggs is very profuse and there are instances where only about a hundred eggs were present in the ovary which normally has more than 10,000 eggs. A few fishes were collected with the parasites hanging out as a cluster through the anal opening probably due to lack of space in the ovary.

TABLE I

*The frequency of occurrence of the nematode parasite Philometra rajani
in the fish Pennahia aneus*

Months & Years	Total No. of fishes examined	No. of fishes infested	Percentage of Infestation
January 1968	91	5	5.5
February "	200	10	5.0
March "	332	26	8.0
April "	254	25	9.8
May "	275	23	8.3
June "	281	7	2.5
July "	194	4	2.0
August "	191	8	4.2
September "	172	5	2.9
October "	156	5	3.2
November "	—	N O	D A T A
December "	28	nil	nil
January 1969	107	9	8.4
February "	65	4	6.1
March "	99	9	9.9

The host specificity of the parasite is evident as it occurs chiefly in *Pennahia aneus* though rarely in other fishes of the same family such as *Wak dussumieri*, *Johnius belengerii* and *Nibea maculata* of the same locality.

The parasite is more specific to female fishes as out of one hundred and forty infected fishes only seven are males. There seems to be seasonal variation in the

occurrence of the parasites (Table I). Out of two thousand three hundred and ninety-five fishes examined during 15 months one hundred and forty fishes were found to be infected (6.9%). In general the largest occurrence is during January-May period, after which there is a decline.

Though the occurrence of the parasite does not appear to affect the well-being of the host, it causes great damage to the stock by destroying the eggs.

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*Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute,
Regional Centre, Mandapam Camp.*

R. S. LAL MOHAN

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