

NURSERY OF THE GIANT CLAM *TRIDACNA SQUAMOSA* IN KOH TAO, GULF OF THAILAND

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Hatchery-produced juveniles of giant clam *Tridacna squamosa* with shell length 1-5 cm were transferred into a nursery at Koh Tao in the Gulf of Thailand for further restocking purpose. Nursery culture in a natural reef area was performed at 3-5 m depth using various types of bottom net enclosures to determine the appropriate method, size of the clams susceptible to bottom nursery, and nursing period. Juveniles were maintained at varied densities depending on juvenile size so they had enough space to expand their mantle naturally until reaching the releasable size of over 10 cm. On an average, 95% of the juveniles with shell length of 3-5 cm survived in bottom cages throughout a nursing period of 6 months, unless the cages were destroyed by wave and storm action. Juveniles of the size smaller than 3 cm suffered high mortality. Some enclosures were made of plastic netlon folded into box-shape with coral rubble as substrate for juvenile attachment. This type of enclosure yielded acceptable survival and growth of clams. It was used in the reef, but resulted in lower survival and growth than the more stable metal-framed cages. Details on nursery method, growth and survival of the juveniles raised in each type of bottom cage, as well as advantage and constraint of each nursery method, are discussed.