

ENVIRONMENTAL PARAMETERS, BIOLOGY AND STOCKS OF *MERETRIX LYRATA* IN THE MEKONG DELTA, VIETNAM

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We have studied environmental factors influencing stocks of *Meretrix lyrata*, which is a commercially important bivalve in Vietnam. The species lives within the sediment where its habitat is influenced by the pH, temperature, salinity, dissolved oxygen, total suspended solid, chemical oxygen demand, biological oxygen demand, chlorophyll *a*, and bacteria. We have focused on the total number of *Vibrio*.

Hydrographic and meteorological factors were also noted: air temperature, velocity of the wind, total rain fall, and the tidal regime on clam grounds in the Mekong Delta: Thanh Phong village (Thanh Phu district), Thoi Thuan village (Binh Dai district) in Ben Tre province, Tan Thanh village (Go Cong Dong district) in Tien Giang province and some places at Thoi Thuan village (Binh Dai district), Bao Thuan village (Ba Tri district) in Ben Tre province, and Tan Thanh village (Go Cong Dong district) in Tien Giang province. Besides, some of the main biological characteristics of *Meretrix lyrata* were studied, viz. growth rate, quantity and quality of stomach contents, development of the gonads, and hermaphroditism in mature individuals. Emphasis has been on the variable yields and estimates of some of the main factors, which affect the quantity of clams. Statistics was used to estimate the market size yield of *Meretrix lyrata* per year in Tien Giang and Ben Tre province in the Mekong Delta. The present study forms a scientific base to propose ways to protect the natural breeding grounds and to provide juveniles raised to market size in the Mekong Delta.