

**THE DISTRIBUTION OF FISH LARVAE
ALONG THE ANDAMAN COAST OF THAILAND**

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ABSTRACT

Fish larvae were collected at 57 stations distributed along the west coast of Thailand in March-April 1982 and again in January-February 1983. Altogether 8296 larvae were caught and 69 families identified. The diversity of the Andaman Sea ichthyoplankton is similar to that observed in other open tropical seas. The diversity among larvae of demersal fish was considerably higher than the diversity among larvae of pelagic and mesopelagic fish, a trend also found in other tropical collections. Larvae of demersal fish made up ca. 50 % of all larvae caught. In contrast, demersal fish account for 80-90 % of the landings from the Andaman coast. This difference may suggest that the pelagic fisheries resources here are presently not efficiently utilized. Fish larvae showed patchy distributions suggesting that stations where maximum numbers were found were close to spawning sites; some areas worth further study are suggested. The number of larvae caught at each station was generally unrelated between the two samplings and also unrelated to environmental parameters (primary production, concentration of chlorophyll, temperature, salinity, and turbidity). Distribution maps of the most abundant families are presented; few consistent patterns emerge. The lack of consistency in distribution patterns and relations to environmental parameters are discussed; it is suggested that more fine-scaled sampling is required to interpret patterns, and that the present study has prepared the ground for such research.