

ZOOPLANKTON COMMUNITY IN SAPAM BAY, PHUKET ISLAND

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ABSTRACT

Zooplankton communities in Sapam Bay were studied during a 33-month period, January 1994–September 1996. Monthly samplings were performed using a 330- μm net. The total zooplankton densities were in the range of 84–5,859 ($1,476 \pm 1,142$, mean \pm SD) ind./ m^3 and the biomass in terms of ash free dry weight (AFDW) varied between 0.74–46.33 (8.18 ± 6.73) mg/ m^3 . No clear seasonal pattern in either density or biomass was observed. Nevertheless, there was a trend of higher values late in the SW-monsoon season. Meroplankton contributed up to 40% of the zooplankton, and half of these were economically importance marine larvae. Total average zooplankton density showed no differences between years (1,450 ind./ m^3 in 1994, 1,548 ind./ m^3 in 1995 and 1,251 ind./ m^3 in 1996). Average AFDW declined gradually with 10.2, 8.1 and 6.1 mg/ m^3 in 1994, 1995 and 1996, respectively.