

Suitability of brackish water tilapia species from the Ivory Coast for lagoon aquaculture. I – Reproduction



The main characteristics of the reproductive biology of *Tilapia guineensis* and *Sarotherodon melanotheron* have been studied in Ebrié lagoon (Ivory Coast), with a comparison between natural and cultured populations. In this lagoon, the two species breed throughout the year without interruption. However, seasonal variations in the intensity of the sexual activity have been observed and are more pronounced at the Layo aquaculture station, where the hydroclimate is more unstable than in other lagoon sectors studied. The proportion of mature individuals, the mean GSI, the relative fecundity and the spawning frequency are higher during the dry season than during the rainy season. In rearing enclosures, both species reach sexual maturity at a smaller size, and produce smaller but more numerous oocytes than in the wild. On the other hand, the relationship between the spawn weight and the female body weight are remarkably similar under both situations. For *S. melanotheron*, which is a male mouthbreeder, the number of brooded eggs or fry is positively related to the male body weight. In 2 m³ concrete tanks, the mean elapsed time between two successive spawnings is

about 2 weeks for *S. melanotheron* and about 3 weeks for *T. guineensis*.

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