

### SEASONAL PATTERNS OF LARVAL FISH DISTRIBUTION AND ABUNDANCE IN THE NORTH EASTERN MEDITERRANEAN

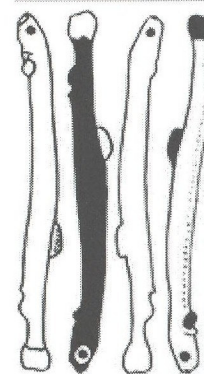
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The eastern Mediterranean is described as the most oligotrophic region of the Mediterranean Sea. However, the region has also a unique dynamic ecosystem character sheltering both endemic and exotic fish species at the same time and has the richest fish diversity along the Turkish coasts. Limited ichthyoplankton data have been reported on this region and there is no available information of fish larvae composition in the eastern Mediterranean. The aim of present study is to determine the change of the seasonal composition, abundance, diversity, distribution of larval fish and understanding the influence of ambient physical and chemical factors in eastern Mediterranean Sea. The larval samples were taken seasonally at 47 stations between November 2005 and January 2007. Samples were collected vertically from bottom to surface using Hensen net with 300 µm mesh. A total of 3656 fish larvae representing 134 taxa belonging to 42 families were identified, which 93 to species, 25 to genus and 16 to family basis. The most abundant species were *Engraulis encrasicolus* (Linnaeus, 1752) and *Cyclothone braueri* Jespersen&Tåning, 1926 in July 2006, which accounted for 18.9 and 9.9 % of the total respectively. Highest values of larval diversity ( $H'$ ) in January 2007 (4.618 bits/ind.) and lowest values in July 2006 (3.991 bits/ind.) were determined. *Myctophum asperum* Richardson, 1845; *Lampanyctus alatus* Goode & Bean, 1896 and *Lobianchia gemellarii* (Cocco, 1838) (bathypelagic) (Boulenger, 1889) are new records of deep sea (bathypelagic) fish larvae for the Turkish coastline and the eastern Mediterranean.

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32nd Annual Larval Fish Conference



August 4-6  
Kiel, Germany

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