

**Gonadal Maturation Stages of Pinkfingered Vinegar Crab *Episesarma chengtongense*
(Serene and Soh 1967) from Capiz, Philippines**

An Undergraduate Special Problem

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ABSTRACT

The pink-fingered vinegar crab *Episesarma chengtongense* is a growing fishery resource in the mangrove areas of the Philippines and may have potential for aquaculture and stock enhancement. To determine the gonadal maturation stages for both male and female for this species, a study was conducted from February to May 2015 of the pink-fingered crab from Capiz, Philippines. The determination of the gonadal maturation stages was based on the gross morphology and histological characteristics of the male and female gonads. In both sexes, gonad activity occurred throughout the study duration but for females, the peak egg bearing month was in May (87%). Body sizes of ovigerous females were from 31.9 – 42.3 mm (CW). The greatest prevalence of ovigerous females was in the size range of 35-39 mm CW; the lowest percentage at 40-44 mm CW. Male crabs with mature testes were consistently high (70-100%) in the four months duration of the study. The smallest female carrying eggs was 31.9 mm CW. Four stages of ovarian maturation were identified namely: developing (Stage II) with a yellow colored gonad, ripe (Stage III) with orange colored gonad, mature (Stage IV) with brown colored gonad and spent (Stage V) with light brown colored gonad. Two stages of male gonadal maturation were identified namely immature (Stage I) with translucent to off white testes and mature. (Stage II) with creamy white testes.