EMBRYONIC DEVELOPMENT AND HATCHING RATE OF GROUPER (*Epinephelus suillus*) EGGS INCUBATED AT DIFFERENT STOCKING DENSITIES

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ABSTRACT

Fertilized eggs of the grouper *Epinephelus suillus* were obtained from natural spawning of broodstock reared in a 50-t concrete tank at the Aquaculture Department of the Southeast Asian Fisheries Development Center, Tigbauan, Iloilo. The development of eggs incubated at three different stocking densities (50, 100, and 150 eggs/l) were monitored. Hatching rates in the different treatments were also determined.

Fertilized eggs were floating, non-adhesive transparent, and spherical in shape with a mean diameter range of 0.83 - 0.84 mm. The yolk was colorless transparent, and possessed a single oil globule of 0.22 mm in diameter.

The eggs have developed into the 2-cell stage 45 min after stocking. Eggs incubated at 100 eggs/l hatched 24 h after stocking while hatching occurred after 27 h and 5 min at 50 eggs/l. No hatching was observed at 150 eggs/l stocking density even after 28 h post-stocking. Water temperature and salinity during the experiment were 27 °C and 18 ppt, respectively.