



A quick glance at the graph below shows a recent meteoric rise in publishing activity on seabass, an Indo-Pacific species known as barramundi in Australia and Papua New Guinea, and not to be confused with the Mediterranean seabass *Dicentrarchus labrax*.

In the mid-1970s Thai researchers began to develop artificial reproduction techniques for seabass and the bulk of work since then has been on realizing its aquaculture potential. I used two sources to examine seabass research activity—"Seabass abstracts", a very good collection of 280 references, which was published in 1986 by the Brackish-water Aquaculture Information System (BRAIS), SEAFDEC Aquaculture Department, Tigbauan, Iloilo, Philippines, (which, incidentally is preparing a review of seabass culture) and the online database of the Aquatic Science and Fisheries Abstracts (ASFA).

ASFA contained 142 articles on seabass from 1977 through 1985. BRAIS found 224 over the same period. Focusing on aquaculture, which is where the interest is, ASFA has only 46 articles, 36 of which were from one report. I checked each abstract in the BRAIS bibliography and found 155 clearly

Who's Working on *Lates calcarifer* (Seabass)?

J.L. MACLEAN
ICLARM

Seabass (*Lates calcarifer*). Watercolor by Mr. Saleh, Indonesia.

aquaculture-oriented articles for 1977-1985. The earliest such article, incidentally, was published in 1951.

The graph is based on BRAIS' "Seabass abstracts". Research publishing began in earnest in 1971. Peak activity was in 1982, when about half of the literature consisted of articles in the "Report of training course on seabass spawning and larval rearing" South China Sea Fisheries Development and Coordinating Programme (SCS/GEN/82/39, 1982, 105 p. Address: c/o BFAR, Arcadia Bldg., 860 Quezon Ave., Quezon City, Philippines), the report found by ASFA also. This is a landmark and a most important reference. Less well known but equally important is the "Report of Thailand and Japan Joint Coastal Aquaculture Research Project, Songkhla, Thailand, Apr. 1981-Mar. 1984", published by the Japan International Cooperation Agency (P.O. Box 216, Shinjuku Mitsui Bldg., 2-1-1, Nishi-Shinjuku, Shinjuku-ku, Tokyo, Japan) which has many useful contributions and accounted for a significant part of the 1984 seabass literature.

Throughout, Thai scientists predominate: in the past five years, Pairat Kosutarak and Tida Pechmanee have written on culture and nutrition, and Sujin Maneewong and Tanan Tattanon of the National Institute of Coastal Aquaculture, Songkhla, Thailand, on seabass culture; Wichien Sakares of the Brackishwater Fishery Station, Rayong, Thailand, has worked on pen and cage culture. Pinij Kungvankij is one of the prominent

pioneers in seabass culture also. Pinij's early work was in Satul, Thailand, where I remember seeing his tanks full of juvenile seabass; their parents were in a separate tank, spawning regularly near the full moon. Pinij has since helped develop seabass spawning at the SEAFDEC Aquaculture Department, where work is also continuing. Pinij's work there for the Network of Aquaculture Centres in Asia (NACA) resulted in a paper on mass seabass production by environmental manipulation in the just published Proceedings of the First Asian Fisheries Forum, and a manual: Biology and Culture of Seabass (*Lates calcarifer*) NACA Training Manual Series No. 3, available from NACA Coordinator, UNDP, P.O. Box 618, Bangkok, Thailand. Pinij is now based at the FAO/UNDP Sea Farming Project (c/o Dinas Perikanan Propinsi Lampung Dati I, JL Bhayangkara, Bandar Lampung), Indonesia. Credit should also be given here to the workers who developed seabass propagation in the 1970s—Sawat Wongsomnuk, Sujin Maneewong and Umpol Pongsuwana.

Outside Thailand, Australia and PNG account for most of the research activity. It would be remiss not to mention the earlier workers who laid down a solid foundation of biological knowledge on seabass biology—D. Dunstan, R. Moore, N. Morrissy and F. Reynolds. In the last few years, the most prominent researchers of seabass biology are T.L.O. Davis (CSIRO Division of Fisheries Research, G.P.O. Box 1538, Hobart, Tasmania 7001, Australia), and D.J. Russell (Fisheries Research Station, Department of Primary Industries, c/o P.O. Burnett Heads, Q 4670, Australia). Australia is finally catching up on seabass spawning, recently reported by Dr. M. MacKinnon, Walkamin Research Station (c/o Queensland Dept. Primary Industries, G.P.O. Box 46, Brisbane 4001, Australia).

Students of seabass have a good literature base and direction. The bibliography of BRAIS is an essential beginning. Contact with relevant experts such as those noted above is recommended, as is obtaining the three major documents cited.

