Abstract

The Philippines is an archipelago of more than 7,100 islands with 17,460 km of coastline, including mangrove forests which covered about 450,000 ha in the 1920s. Coastal aquaculture began a few centuries ago when earthen ponds for the culture of milkfish (Chanos chanos) were first converted from mangrove swamps. For a long time, coastal aquaculture was synonymous with milkfish pond culture; while prawns and shrimps were incidental byproducts resulting from wild fry that entered the ponds during tidal water exchange.

In 1943, studies on low density monoculture of the giant tiger prawn (Penaeus monodon) using wild fry were initiated at the Dagat-dagatan Experimental Station of the Bureau of Fisheries in Malabon, Rizal Province. Information on the ecology and early life history of P. monodon generated by the Institute of Fisheries Research Development of the Mindanao State University (MSU-IFRD) in the early 1970s was used in setting up the first experimental prawn hatchery at IFRD.

This was followed by the establishment of big-tank and small-tank hatcheries at the Aquaculture Department of the Southeast Asian Fisheries Development Center (SEAFDEC/AQD) in Iloilo Province. An active technology transfer program that included short-term, hands-on training courses on small-scale hatchery starting in 1977, contributed to a dramatic hatchery production of 15 million prawn PL in 1978.

Based on the earlier Dagat-dagatan studies, SEAFDEC/AQD started higher-density (semi-intensive) growout pond experiments with P. monodon in the mid-1970's. At that time, farmers started stocking more than 10,000 PL/ha using hatchery fry. Soon after, the first intensive culture trials, using imported Taiwanese technology and feed formulations were undertaken by a Philippine food conglomerate.

The availability of both seed and feed, and the attraction of lucrative export market prices contributed to the take-off of the prawn industry. In 1983, when the country's 56 hatcheries produced 85 million PL's, and commercial pellets for intensive culture first appeared in the market, pond production totalled 12,100 MT, a quantum leap from a harvest of only 1,800 MT the previous year.

Since then production of PL, adults and exports have steadily increased to a peak of 20,000 MT of exports from 40,000 MT of pond harvests in 1988. The following year the bubble burst. From a high of P200/kg (US$1 =P21) in 1988, farm gate prices plummeted to as low as P70/kg in mid-1989 due to Southeast Asian excess production of black tiger prawn, and to prawn exports from China glutting the Japanese market.

This chapter discusses the various components of the Philippine prawn industry with a focus on growout, problems of the farming sector, and problems of the industry as a whole. Lastly, recommendations are offered for long-term viability.
Raising and producing freshwater shrimp or prawns in your own aquaculture fish farm can be a profitable business. Shrimp farming and feeding advice given here. Shrimp farming has come a long way and has transformed into a global industry, from the small scale farms in Asia and Thailand. There are only a few species of shrimp that are farmed globally. One of the most popular species is the Macrobrachium rosenbergii, the Giant Malaysian Prawn, which is a freshwater prawn, native of South Asia. Will be retiring in the Philippines and would like to create a decorative pond where I can culture fresh water prawns. Plan to use solar powered filter and oxygenator. Prawns for home consumption not commercial.