

Abundance and Distribution of Crabs and Shrimps Off the South Coast of Jamaica

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ABSTRACT

This study was undertaken to provide some basic information on the crab and shrimp stocks of the south coast of Jamaica. Seven stations were sampled on a monthly basis over an 18 month period. Specimens of adult crabs and shrimps were obtained with a 1.5 m beam-trawl. Various relevant physical and environmental parameters were also monitored over the same period.

Portunids and penaeoids were collected throughout the shallow waters of the south coast of Jamaica. Higher yields of portunids were obtained off the coast of St. Catherine than elsewhere on the south coast, and most of the penaeoids were caught in and around Kingston Harbour.

Five species of portunids were identified in this study: *Callinectes danae*, *C. exasperatus*, *C. marginatus*, *C. ornatus*, and *C. sapidus*. *C. danae* and *C. ornatus*, together, comprised over 80% of the crab catch. Seven penaeoids were identified in this study, namely, *Penaeus brasiliensis*, *P. duorarum*, *P. notialis*, *P. schmitti*, *Sicyonia laevigata*, *Trachypenaeus constrictus*, and *Xiphopenaeus kroyeri*. *P. notialis* comprised over 70% of the total shrimp catch. The average catch rates for the portunids and penaeoids were 2.84 kg h⁻¹ and 1.10 kg h⁻¹ respectively.