

## Preliminary Investigations of Marine Cage Culture of Red Hybrid Tilapia in Jamaica

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### ABSTRACT

A preliminary study was conducted to investigate growth and survival of seawater-acclimated Red Hybrid tilapia in floating cages. The cages were sited in Bowden Bay, an area currently used for oyster culture. The objectives included an examination of the suitability of cages as rearing units for seawater-held Red Hybrid tilapia.

The all male fish (average weight 40 – 50 g) were stocked into three rectangular cages (2m<sup>3</sup>) at densities of 100, 150, and 200 fish/cage. After three weeks in cages, infection of fish by ectoparasite *Neobenedenia melleni* (Platyhelminthes: Monogenea) resulted in high mortality. Treatment of surviving fish (formalin bath 10 ppm/30 sec) along with relocation of the cages to deeper water proved to be an effective control strategy.

A new set of fish were stocked in relocated cages at a density of 100 fish/cage. Fish were fed manually with a pelletized diet (30% protein) at a rate of 5% estimated fish weight twice daily. Specific growth rate and percentage survival ranged from 2.1 – 3.2%/day and 86 – 98%, respectively. This compares well with production figures obtained for Red Tilapia cultured in freshwater systems in Jamaica.