

Selection of Food in Various Size Groups of Nile Tilapia, *Oreochromis niloticus* (L.) in Wadi Haneefah Stream, Saudi Arabia

A.S. AL-AKEL, H.F. AL-KAHM, M.J.K. SHAMSI AND Z. AHMED
Department of Zoology, College of Science, King Saud University, P.O. Box 2455,
Riyadh-11451. Saudi Arabia.

Abstract.- Selectivity of food by *Oreochromis niloticus* (Linnaeus 1758) was studied in Wadi Haneefah stream by computing the electivity index for three different size groups (I, 3.1-7.5cm T.L; II, 7.6-12.0cm TL and III 12.1-18.5cm T.L). The fish was selective in its feeding behaviour. The smaller fishes usually feed upon zooplankton, while the bigger ones mostly on phytoplankton. Acceptability and abundance of food organisms as well as the mechanical and physiological adaptations of fish to capture and digest the food organism may be the main factors for the selection of food. Inaccessibility of the prey to the fish and distastefulness of the prey may influence the selective feeding behaviour. Filtering capacity of the gill rakers and mobility of the fish might be the major factors for food selection.

Key word: Electivity index, food selection.