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Fish larvae from the Gulf of California

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Taxonomic composition of fish larvae was analysed from 464 plankton samples obtained during 10 oceanographic surveys in the Gulf of California between 1984 and 1988. We identified 283 taxa: 173 species, 57 genera, and 53 families. Tropical and subtropical species predominated except during the winter, when temperate-subarctic species were dominant. The most abundant species were the mesopelagic *Benthosema panamense, Triphoturus mexicanus* and *Vinciguerria lucetia,* but the coastal pelagic species *Engraulis mordax, Opisthonema* spp., *Sardinops caeruleus* and *Scomber japonicus* were also prominent. The taxonomic composition of the ichthyoplankton shows the seasonality of the Gulf as well as environmental changes that occurred between the 1984-1987 warm period and the 1956-1957 cool period previously reported. The presence of *E. mordax* larvae as one of the most abundant species in the Gulf provides evidence of the reproduction of this species two years before the development of the northern anchovy fishery and the decline of the sardine fishery in the Gulf of California. Taxonomic composition of fish larvae was analysed from 464 plankton samples obtained during 10 oceanographic surveys in the Gulf of California between 1984 and 1988. We identified 283 taxa: 173 species, 57 genera, and 53 families. Tropical and subtropical species predominated except during the winter, when temperate-subarctic species were dominant. The most abundant species were the mesopelagic *Benthosema panamense, Triphoturus mexicanus* and *Vinciguerria lucetia*, but the coastal pelagic species *Engraulis mordax, Opisthonema* spp., *Sardinops caeruleus* and *Scomber japonicus* were also prominent. The taxonomic composition of the ichthyoplankton shows the seasonality of the Gulf as well as environmental changes that occurred between the 1984-1987 warm period and the 1956-1957 cool period previously reported. The presence of *E. mordax* larvae as one of the most abundant species in the Gulf provides evidence of the reproduction of this species two years before the development of the northern anchovy fishery and the decline of the sardine fishery in the Gulf of California.

Palabras clave: Fish larvae, Specialist, ichthyoplankton