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Ecological observations and biomass proximate composition of the brine shrimp *Artemia* (Crustacea: Anostaca) from Pichilingue, Baja California, México

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The brine shrimp, most probably *Artemia franciscana* occurs in the solar salt plant ('salina') of Pichilingue (24°15 N and 110°20 W, total area about 10 ha), Baja California Sur, México. During the periods September 1999 to March 2000 and June 2000 to March 2001, salinity and temperature were determined weekly in selected evaporation ponds, as were the biological parameters of *Artemia* biomass, size of adult females and males, and monthly the biochemical composition of dried *Artemia* biomass. An explosive growth of *Artemia* was observed during moderate salinity levels (80–120 g l⁻¹), reaching a standing crop level of 300 kg wet weight ha⁻¹. With increasing salinity, biomass production and the size, especially of the females, decreased drastically, probably due to limited availability of natural food and to environmental stress. Brine shrimp survived up to a salinity of 270 g l⁻¹. Despite wide variations in the environmental conditions, the proximate analysis of *Artemia* biomass showed only small differences, with the exception of the crude fibre content.

Palabras clave: *Nyctiphanes simplex*, *Artemia*, salinity, aquaculture, proximate analysis

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