

Reproductive Ecology of Members of Family *Channidae* in Sri Lanka

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The reproductive ecology of members of the family *chanidae* was observed in their natural habitats from 2018 to 2021. The breeding ecology of the *Channa cf. ara* (n=02), *i kelaartii* (n=05), *C. marulius* (n=01), *C. punctata* (n=02), *C. orientalis* (n=04) and *C. striata* (n=07) were recorded in a total of 21 locations by using several environmental variables including the main ecosystem type, altitude, preferred micro-habitat, depth and width of the water body, comparative turbidity of water, shade, substrate, pH level, dissolve oxygen level, salinity, mean annual air temperature and number of individuals in the Cohort. Our results reveal breeding habitats of Sri Lankan Channids do not overlap with each other, showing significant differences in micro-habitat requirements from other members of the family. The *Channa cf. ara* and *C. marulius* breeds in pools in medium size lotic habitats and *C. striata* breeds in lentic habitats including marshes, canals and tanks. The breeding habitats of *Channa cf. ara* and *C. marulius* are geographically separated from each other though their natural habitats show similar characteristics. *C. punctata* breeds in shallow lentic habitats including marshes, canals and small tanks. Both *C. kelaartii* and *C. orientalis* breeds in slow flowing lotic habitats such as small streams. However, *C. orientalis* prefer comparatively shallow water (<15cm) with rocky and sandy substrate while *C. kelaartii* prefer comparatively deep water (<40cm) with muddy and sandy substrate. Occasionally, both the latter species breed in marshes and also in small pools associated with streams and rivers. Information on breeding ecology of Channids in Sri Lanka will help to develop captive breeding protocols for these species and also to preserve these important breeding habitats

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