

Food and Feeding Habits of *Atya gabonensis* from Lower River Benue in Northern Nigeria

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Abstract

The study investigated the stomach content of *Atya gabonensis* from lower River Benue in Nigeria from January 1998 to January 2000. The stomach analysis was carried out using frequency of occurrence and numeric methods. It was observed that the organism fed on algae, diatoms, insect parts and detritus, algae and detritus forming the most important food items. Algae constituted 61.9% of food item by number and 88.5% by occurrence. Detritus occurred in 79.1% of stomachs examined. Amongst the algae, *Scenedesmus quaricauda* was the most preferred, constituting 20.7% by occurrence and 37.9% by number, followed by spirogyra which constituted 17.8% and 23.9% by occurrence and number, respectively. The least eaten food item was insect parts. *A. gabonensis* can be said to be an omnivorous detritivore, its preference for food changing with season and size of the prawn with peak in July.