

A comparative study on the morphometrics, gill rakers and food of a stunted and a non-stunted populations of *Oreochromis mossambicus* (Peters) from Colombo (Beira) lake and Udawalawe reservoir

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The morphometrics, gill rakers and food of a stunted population of *Oreochromis mossambicus* from Colombo (Beira) lake and a non-stunted population of *O. mossambicus* from Udawalawe reservoir were studied. Twenty morphometric characteristics, number and length of gill rakers were studied. Significant morphological differences were found between the stunted population of *O. mossambicus* from Beira lake and non-stunted population of *O. mossambicus* from Udawalawe reservoir. Discriminant analysis of twenty morphometric variables demonstrated significant differences in eight morphometric characteristics between the two populations at size of maturity as well as in three morphological variables between sexes at size of maturity.

There was no significant difference between the relative importance of major taxonomic groups in the diet between the population of *O. mossambicus* in Beira lake and Udawalawe reservoir at size of maturity ($p < 0.05$). However, a significant difference in the number of gill rakers ($p < 0.05$) and spacing of gill rakers ($p < 0.05$) between the two populations at size maturity from Beira lake and Udawalawe reservoir were seen.