

The invertebrate fauna colonizing two submerged aquatic plants in the stream at Horton Plains, Sri Lanka.

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A quantitative study was conducted to determine the invertebrate colonizers of two common trailing submerged aquatic plants, i.e. *Aponogeton crispus* and *Isolepis fluitans*, in the stream at Horton Plains in Sri Lanka during a wet month (October, 1997) when the stream flow rate was approximately 60cm sec⁻¹ and during a dry month (March, 1998) when the stream flow rate was approximately 1.8 cm sec⁻¹.

Isolepis fluitans stands were found intermingled with *A. crispus*. Six groups of aquatic invertebrate fauna, namely, Decapoda, Diptera, Plecoptera, Trichoptera, Odonata and aquatic Oligochaeta were identified from the intermingled aquatic vegetation in the stream banks and in the mid-channel. The average densities (per m²) of colonizing fauna in the stream banks during the wet months amounted to as follows : Decapoda 1175, Diptera 722, Plecoptera 829, Trichoptera 34, Odonata 23 and aquatic Oligochaeta 12. The number increased respectively to 4514, 1514, 1385, 200, 93 and 314 in the dry month. In the mid-channel, density varied mostly with the prevailing rainfall and was low when the water current was high.

Decapoda dominated the aquatic fauna in the macrophyte vegetation. Among the Decapoda, *Caridina singhalensis*, both adult and young were found to be the most dominant (19 g dry wt m⁻²). The least dominant were Odonata (Anisopterans) (0.03 g dry wt m⁻²) which were found in least numbers. The importance of the submerged aquatic macrophytes as colonizing habitats for lotic invertebrates is discussed.