

FURTHER NOTES ON THE LIFE HISTORY OF THE KING PRAWN, *PENAEUS PLEBEJUS* HESSE.

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(Figures 1-15.)

In a paper (Dakin, 1938) on the larval and post-larval development of this common Penaeid prawn of the coast of New South Wales, the first account was given of the habits and life history of a very well known inhabitant of certain of our estuaries and coastal lagoons. At the time this research was first undertaken there was much to be done before it could even be certain that these New South Wales prawns spawned at sea. In fact, the discovery of the breeding place and general life history was the main object of the work. Remarkably little was then known of the life history of the Penaeids. It turned out that, working at the same time, the United States Bureau of Fisheries was following the life history of the common American form, *Penaeus setiferus* (Linn.), on a relatively large scale, whilst Madame Heldt had been working for upwards of six years in the Mediterranean at Salammbô (Tunisia) on *Penaeus trisulcatus* Leach, and four other Penaeid genera. Heldt's excellent and very comprehensive paper was published in October 1938, and last year (1939) the result of the American work was indicated in a paper by J. C. Pearson.

The life history of the Penaeid prawns has thus quite suddenly been very considerably elucidated.

Both Heldt and Pearson were able to work from eggs and larvae reared in the aquarium.

Unfortunately, by reason of the marine conditions prevailing off Sydney, where we have been compelled to work under oceanic conditions with a small boat and lack of many facilities, we have only been able to obtain a relatively small number of the earlier stages and these, when isolated, were in no condition for culture experiments. The different stages had to be isolated from preserved plankton catches. This eventually led to a more concentrated effort on the high seas with nets which could be drawn (with sledge attachment) just above the sea bottom. More material was obtained, but the beautifully certain method of culture has not been possible.