

Predation on egg capsules of coastal skates of the genus *Sympterygia* from central Chile

K.A.N. Villagrán, F.J. Concha, A.B. Guzmán-Castellanos & V.M. Gudiño

Laboratory of Biology and Conservation of Chondrichthyes, Department of Marine Sciences and Natural Resources, Universidad de Valparaíso, Chile.

Natural mortality during early stages of life history in fishes is mostly due to predation on larvae and eggs, and thus it has direct influence on the recruitment and thus, on abundance and population density of adults. Moreover, predation pressure on eggs and larvae is influenced by their size, abundance, and also the duration of these stages. Oviposition areas also conditionate levels of exposure and predation of eggs and larvae, and thus, chosen habitats are paramount for the survival rates of embryos and larvae. Although it has been reported that oviparous elasmobranchs choose the substratum where they lay their eggs, the latter undergo different levels of predation by bony fishes, marine mammals, elasmobranchs, and even some invertebrates. Information on predation rates of coastal oviparous elasmobranchs and the effect on recruitment of these species from the southeastern Pacific remains uncertain. The aim of this study is to check and quantify predation on egg capsules of coastal skates of the genus *Sympterygia* in the area of Montemar, central Chile.