

THE CORRELATION OF WATER LEVEL FLUCTUATION TO FISH PRODUCTION DYNAMICS AND PHYSICO-CHEMICAL FEATURES OF LUBUK LAMPAM FLOODPLAIN IN SOUTH SUMATERA

Agus Djoko Utomo¹⁾ M.Rasyid Ridho²⁾ , Dinar DA Putranto³⁾, dan Edward Saleh⁴⁾

¹⁾Peneliti Balai Riset Perikanan Perairan Lirarn Palembang,

²⁾Dosen F.MIPA Universitas Sriwijaya.

³⁾Dosen F. Teknik Sipil Universitas Sriwijaya

⁴⁾Dosen F. Pertanian Universitas Sriwijaya

ABSTRACTS

Lubuk Lampam is a floodplain system that seasonally inundated in the rainy season and become dried up at the dry season. The fishing activities at Lubuk Lampam floodplain are very intensive and composed of various fishing gear and methods, started with small simple pot traps to large active barrier that can catch a large amount of fish. A study to reveal the pattern of relationship of water level fluctuation to fish production dynamics and water quality was conducted from 1989 to 2003. Water quality parameters observed are water level fluctuation, temperature, pH, dissolved oxygen and dissolved carbon dioxide. Fish production dynamics parameters observed fishing activities, fishing gears, yield. The result showed that the values of water quality parameters and the amount of fish production are fluctuating in accordance with water level fluctuation.

Keywords: floodplain, water level fluctuation, water quality, dynamics, fish production.

INTRODUCTION

Lubuk Lampam is a floodplain system referred locally (South Sumatra) as *lebak lebung*. The condition of this water body is fluctuating according to season, fully inundated during the rainy season but most of its part is completely dried during dry season. The area of Lubuk Lampam as one of the floodplain systems of Lempuing River reach up to 1200 ha during inundation period, but contracted down to about 120 hectares during the dry season (Arifin, 1978). At this time only the floodplain pools, main river segments and tributary channel still containing some water.

During the rainy season, the water inundated the aquatic vegetation resulted in the decaying of the plant. When the level decreasing many of organic material deposited in river segments and floodplain pools the decaying process have an impact to water quality of the floodplain system, characterized by low pH, high level of carbon dioxide and low dissolved oxygen. The fishes that live in the floodplain system have to adapt to this extreme condition. Some of the fishes developed additional breathing organs that were capable to take oxygen directly from the air (Welcome, 1979).

The abundant organic materials in the floodplain system function among the others as natural food for fishes that also feeds directly upon the submerged aquatic vegetation. The submerged organs of aquatic vegetation provide substrate for the growth of periphyton, insects, worms and small shrimp that in its turn also provide rich food sources for fishes. Inundated vegetation in the floodplain at high water time function as spawning and nursery ground for fishes (Utomo dan Asyari 1999). Water level fluctuation in floodplain system at the end will also influence the dynamics movement of fishes and food availability. This study was aimed to reveal the relation of

water level fluctuation to some water quality parameter in Lubuk Lampam floodplain.

Fishing activities in inland water have been done for many years using simple or sophisticated fishing gear. Floodplain is one of inland water type where the fishing activities are practiced intensively by the human population: living nearby. Fishing activities of this kind also being practiced until now in Lubuk Lampam floodplain (1200 ha) Ogan Komering District, South Sumatra until now .

The fishing gear operated in Lubuk Lampam floodplain, among the other includes Active Seine (*Ngesar*), Filtering device (*Tuguk*), Operating Cash Net at the river pools during the Drought period (*Ngubak Lubuk*), active barrier (*Ngesek*), barrier traps (Empang lulung.), filtering device (Tuguk), set long line (Rawai), hook and line (*Tajur*), pot traps (*Sengkirai*) and others. The type of fishing gears operated in Lubuk Lampam floodplain is influenced by the seasonal condition of the ecosystem. During high water time (December-March), the fishing gear that was operated are Sengkirai, Tajur, Tuguk and others, but in during the periods of decreasing waters (April-June) the empang, tuguk, sengkirai and others are operated. During the drought period (July to September) the main fishing activities is the operation are seining (*Ngesar*), active barrier and cash netting in the river pools (Arifin 1978; Hoggarth dan Utomo 1994).

The main production periods in Lubuk Lampam are concentrated from April- June to July-September during the operation of big fishing gear at the periods where the fishes started to migrate and concentrated. During high water periods the fishes usually tend to disperse to the entire ecosystem resulted in low production of capture fishery (Utomo dan Arifin, 1991). Seasonal water level fluctuation in Lubuk Lampam floodplain is also influenced by water utilization for irrigation of paddy rice field or crop field. For irrigation purposes canals that change the ecological connectivity of the floodplain system resulted in sedimentation and decreasing depths of the river segment. (James 1991).

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Data collection

The study was conducted in Lubuk Lampam floodplain, South Sumatra from 1989 to 2003. The data on water level fluctuation was recorded from water level gauge that was set up near the banks the Lempuing River segment at the centre of Lubuk Lampam floodplain. The water level data were taken daily around noon together with transparency data that were taken using Sechi Disk.

The other water quality collected includes temperature, pH, carbon dioxide and dissolved oxygen. For this group of water quality data, the data collection were conducted for our periods in year represents four periods of water level condition. Those periods include (a) period of high water level (December -February); (b) period of decreasing to bank overflow level (April-June); (c) period of low water level (July-September and (d) period of increasing to bank overflow Level (October- November). The methods of water quality parameter monitoring is following APHA (1986) that was described in Table 1. beside measurement of water quality parameter, direct firth observation of habitat condition is Also conducted during the four above periods. The habitat under observation includes river segments, flooded grass land, swamp forest and dry land forest.

Fisher catch, fishing activities And type of fishing gear used were calculated from the daily record of all 30 fishers' folk of Lubuk Lampam floodplain. Water level and production data were analyzed pictorially to observe the relationship of water level and production.

Table 1. Parameter and methods of Analysis of water samples

| Parameters | Units | Methods and instrumen |
|---------------------|-------|--|
| 1. Temperature | oC | Direct measurement, thermometer |
| 2. Transparency | Cm | Direct measurement, Secchi Disk |
| 3. pH | | Direct measurement, universal, pH indicator |
| 4. Carbon dioxide | mg/L | Direct analysis, titrimetry, NaOH as titrant |
| 5. Dissolved oxygen | mg/L | Direct analysis, titrimetry, Winkler methods, NaS ₂ O ₃ as titrant |
| 6. Alkalinity | mg/L | Direct analysis, titrimetry, H ₂ SO ₄ solution as titrant |

Data Analysis

The data collected were analyzed pictorially and tabulated so the difference of the parameter values for each month or season that represent the water level fluctuation in the floodplain. The difference of values between parameters was analyzed using the randomization methods (Manly 1997). Randomization test was performed 10,000 times (9,999 randomized data plus original data) and repeated for six times. The R-statistical program (R Development Core Team 2005) was used for the present statistical analyses and the significant level was set to 5 %.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Water level fluctuation

According to fluctuation of average water level fluctuation from 1989 to 2001 (Fig. 1), it is shown that highest water level was observed in the period of December - April that coincidence with the rainy season. In May to June, water level started to decrease because it is near the end of rainy season. In the dry season (August to September), lowest water level was observed bit in October to November water level started to increase again early in rainy season.

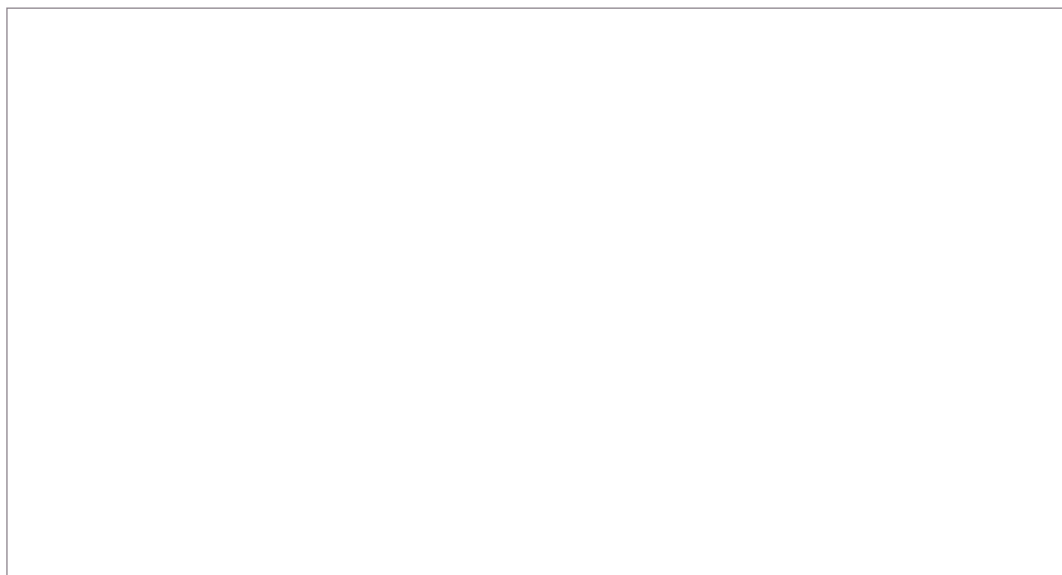


Figure 1. Water level fluctuation at Lubuk Lampam floodplain

Transparency

Figure 2 showed that, started from January (high water level period) the transparency level is relatively high but tend to decrease to the minimum in concordance with decreasing water to the lowest water Level in October. This pattern

probably due to the level of suspended organic matter is not to large at high water level, but oppositely, the suspended organic matter is not to large at hight water level, but oppositely, the suspended organic level, increasing when the water level becoming contracted at the dry season, causing low Level of transparency.

pH

In general, a floodplain tend to t:howedi a Low pH, except at its river segment habitat in especially when in the dry season (August-September) the pH the reach up to 6.5-7.0 because this river segment do not connected to flooded grass land and swamp forest. The water in the river segment mainly consisted of water mass that originated from the upstream part of the watershed. The riparian part of the floodplain usually characterized by low pH (< 7). This riparian part of the floodplain ecologically connected to the adjacent river segment started in early rainy season (October to November) to the high water level periods in the middle of rainy season in December to March. The phenomenon of decreasing pH in river segment to 5.5-6.0 probably due to the input of decaying; organic matter from flooded grassland habitat (Table 2.2).

Flooded grassland area that ties on the riparian part of Lempuing River as the connected river segment usually shows a low pH (< 6). The pH at the flooded grassland during period of high water level (December-March) relatively still high (5.5-6.0) because of the large water volume at this expansion period where the river water flows into this habitat. When the water level started to decreased the pH reach down to 5.0-6.0, because of higher concentration of organic matter due decreasing water volume. In the dry season

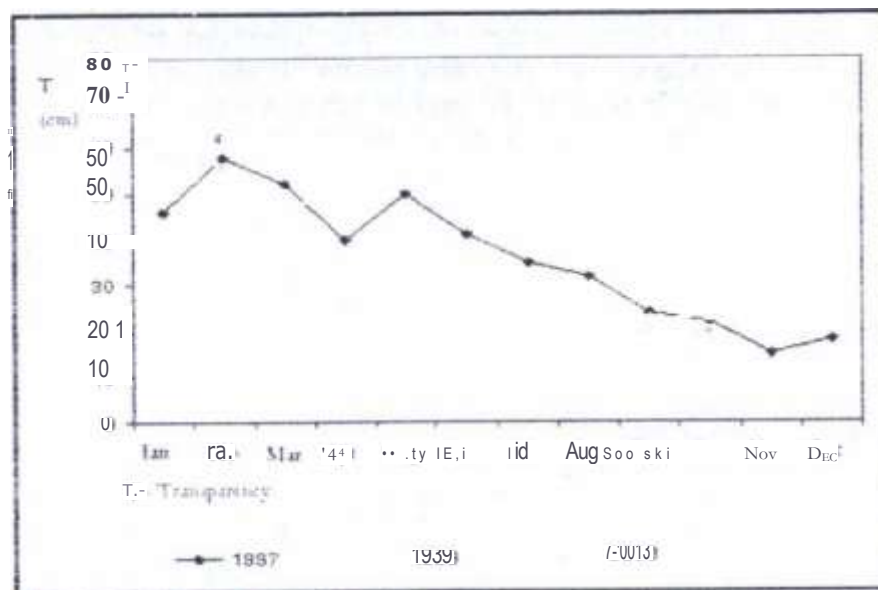


Figure 2. The decreasing trend of transparency Lubuk Larnpam floodplain, South Sumatera

(August-September), flooded grassland habitat becomes dried up leaving a small volume of water at the bottom of natural floodplain pools (*lebung*), where a large amount organic matter accumulated and made the pH range from 4.5 to 5.5 (Table 2).

Table 2. Range of values of water quality parameter in Lubuk Lampam floodplain

| No. | Habitat type | Periods | Parameters | | | |
|-----|-------------------------|-----------------------------------|------------------------|---------|-------------------------|------------------------|
| | | | Water Temperature (oC) | pH | Dissolved oxygen (mg/l) | CO ₂ (mg/l) |
| 1 | Flooded riparian system | High water level (Dec-March) | 27.0-28.0 | 5.5-6.0 | 2.0-2.7 | 12.0-16.4 |
| | | Decreasing water Level (Apr-June) | 27.0-29.0 | 5.0-6.0 | 2.0-2.5 | 14.0-20.7 |
| | | Low water level (July-Sept) | 29.0-31.0 | 4.5-5.5 | 1.4-2.0 | 18.0-30.0 |
| | | Increasing water level (Oct-Nov) | 28.0-29.0 | 5.0-6.0 | 1.5-2.0 | 15.0-20.0 |
| 2 | River segment | High water level (Dec.-March) | 27.0-28.0 | 5.5-6.5 | 2.0-3.0 | 11.0-17.5 |
| | | Decreasing water level (Apr-June) | 27.0-28.0 | 5.5-6.0 | 3.5-6.4 | 11.0-14.5 |
| | | Low water level (July-Sept.) | 28.0-29.0 | 6.5-7.0 | 5.5-6.7 | 8.0-12.0 |
| | | Increasing water level (Oct.-Nov) | 28.0-29.0 | 6.0-6.5 | 2.5-3.5 | 13.5-17.5 |

Dissolved oxygen.

Dissolved oxygen levels in the flooded grassland and swamp forest generally shows a low level (<7 mg/L) because decaying processes of organic matter required a lot of oxygen. At the river segment, oxygen level relatively higher (5.5-6.7) in the dry season (August-September) because the connection with the riparian part of floodplain is disconnected and the water column predominantly showing the character of upper river segment. In the periods where the water level started to increase (October-November) to high water level period in rainy season (December-February) the river segment laterally connected to flooded grassland and swamp forest causing the oxygen level reach down to 2.5-5.5 mg/L. When the water level started to decrease in April to June, the oxygen level in the river segment seemed to be higher (3.5-6.4 mg/L) because the influence of water originated from flooded grassland and swamp forest started to diminished. In the dry season (August-September), flooded grassland habitat experience drought that accumulates organic matter in the bottom of floodplain pools creates a low dissolved water and reducing condition (Effendi 2000).

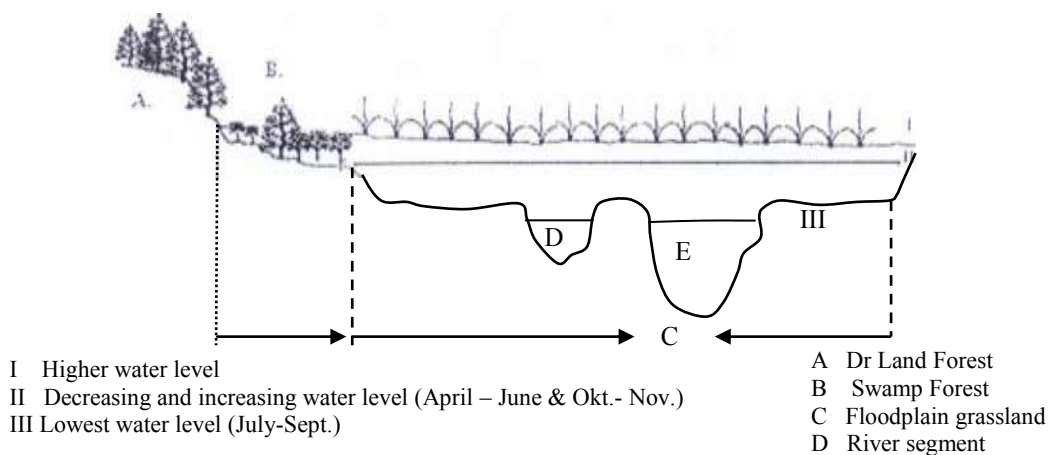


Figure 3. Cross Section diagram of Lubuk Lampam floodplain

Carbon dioxide

Carbon of the product-, of decaying process of organic matter in aquatic system. In general, the level of carbon dioxide at the floodplain ecosystem is relatively high (>8 mg/L). At the river segment in the dry season, the level of dissolved carbon dioxide reach its minimum (8.0-12)mg/l due to disconnection of this habitat with organic rich habitat such as the riparian part of floodplain. Early rainy season (December-March) to the middle rainy season (December -March) the level of carbon dioxide are 11.0-17.5 mg/L because the influence of decaying processes in the flooded area of the riparian system. On the other hand, when the water level started to decrease (April -July) the carbon dioxide also decreasing to 11.0 -14. mg/l since at that time probably the decaying process already reach to advance level and the influence of flooded grassland also decreasing.

On the floodplain ecosystem during rainy season (December to March), the dissolved carbon dioxide level range 12.0-16.5 mg/L, and when the water level started to decrease (April-July), carbon dioxide level started to increase to 18.0-20.0 mg/L and reach to its maximum during the dry season at around 18.0-30.0 mg/L. This pattern probably due to contraction of water volume that cause significant increase of organic level.

Although the range data indicated that there is a difference of water quality parameter between periods, randomization test to complete data showest different results. Randomization test (Fig 4 and Fig.5) show that only CO₂ level differ significantly between high water level with decreasing water periods. The carbon dioxide concentration is increasing at decreasing water level period.

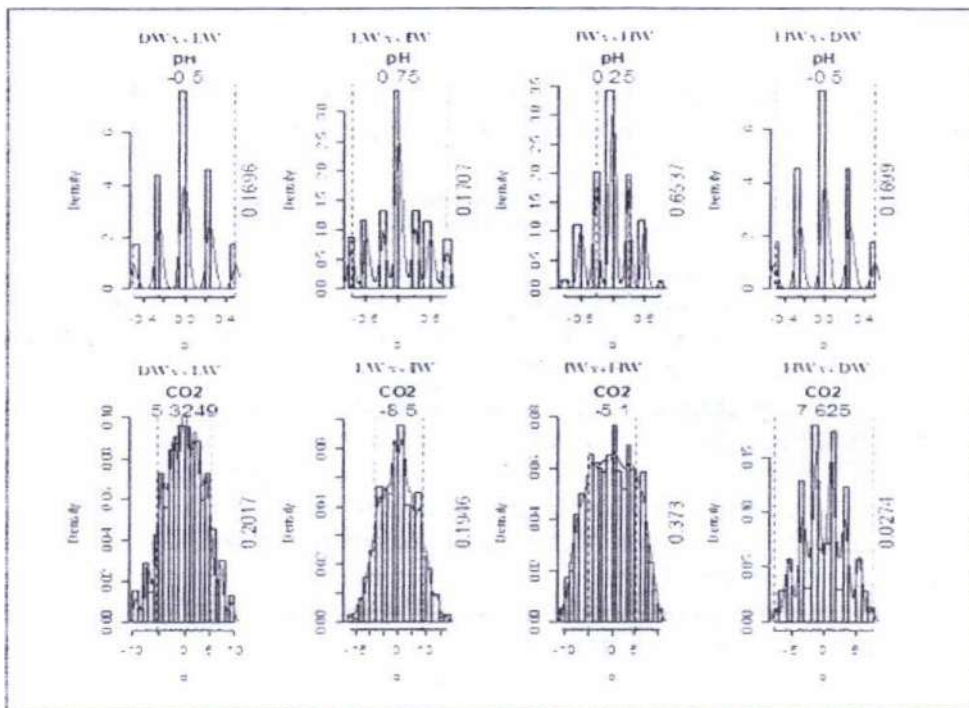


Figure .4. Histograms showing the distribution of differences of pH and dissolved CO₂ between periods obtained by 9,999 times of randomization plus original of parameter values in Lubuk Lampam. DW= Decreasing water level period (Apr-June); LW= low water level period (July-Sept); IW= Increasing water level period (Uct-Nov); HW= High water level period (Dec-Mart)

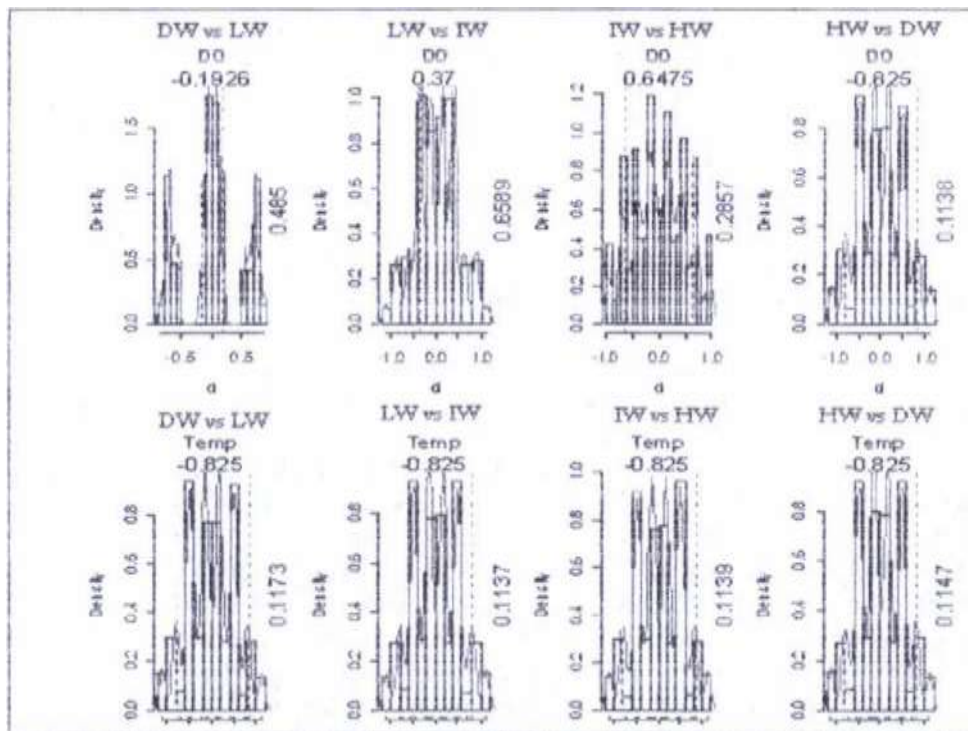


Figure 5. Histograms showing the distribution of differences of dissolved oxygen and water temperature between periods obtained by 9,999 times of randomization plus original of parameter values in Lubuk Lamparn, OW- Decreasing water level period (Apr-June); LW= low water Level period (July-Sept); IW= Increasing water level period (Oct-Nov); HW. High water level period (Dec-Mar)

Change of Habitat

The understand the dynamics chane of Lubuk Lampam floodplain system according to season could be trace back in Fig. 3. Dryland forest (Talang) is a habitat type belongs to floodplain system that do not inundated by water even at the middle of rainy season.

This dry Land consisted of rubber trees, rengas trees (*Gluta reinghas*), Dipterocarp trees and others. The trees in this habitat type are very tall. (>10 m). Even though the dry land forest do not inundated by water at the rainy seasons, but it still ecologically influence the aquatic part of floodplain ecosystem because the detritus is still carried away by surface run off into the floodplain system and influence the water quality in the floodplain system.

Swamp forest (*Rawang*) is a forest of trees that can withstand inundation and them usually not to tall (4-7 m). Swamp forest has important ecological function such spawning, nursery and Feeding grassland (lebak) is a part of floodplain ecosystem dominated by aquatic macrophytes (Graminae), water hyacinth (*Eichhornia crassipes*) and others. The aquatic macrophytes consisted of submerged, floating and rotted species. Flooded grassland is inundated Longer than the swamp forest, since it is started to be flooded by water when the water initially increasing, reaching its maximum then started to decrease.

Floodplain pool are depression at the land of flooded grass land that always filled with water even though in the normal dry season. The size of floodplain pools varied between one to several hectares and ecologically functions as the refuge site for several fish species in the dry season, when the other part of floodplain becoming dry.

The river segment as the part of floodplain ecosystem is always filled with flowing water even in the long dry season. River sements in the floodplain is a life line of the



system since it the source of water supply. There is deeper part at the bend of meandering parts of floodplain system. This deeper part of the river segment refer as to river pool (or *lubuk*) that function as refuge site for big size fishes at the dry season such as *Tape (Wallago sp)*, *Patin (Pangasius sp)*, *Baung (Mystus nernurus)* and other.

Fishing period

Traps are predominant among various fishing gears operated in the floodplain. Intensive fishing activities were done by the fishers at the period water level decreasing to bank over flow level at the end of rainy season (April to June) to the dry season (July-September). When the water level approaching the bank over flow level the fishes are easily caught by traps, but during the dry season many of water body in the floodplain significantly contracted resulting in high efficiency in operation of active fishing gear such as *Ngesar* (active seine) and *Ngesek* (active barrier) an others (Table 3). Non selective fishing gear that also can catch the fishes in large quantities is barrier traps (*Empang*), filtering device (*Tuguk/Corong*), active seine (*Ngesar*) (*Active Seine*), active barrier or *Ngesek* (Hoggarth and Utomo, 1994). *Tuguk* have more serious impact for the sustainability of the stock since it also cutting the migration route of migratory fishes (Utomo, 2001). Based on this situation, it seems that protection management tools in the form of introduction of fishery reserve is urgently needed, in order to guarantee the Availability of spatial resource that can sustain the brood stock and fingerling. Hartoto (2000) defined fishery resource as a body of water whether it is inland or marine that fishes is prohibited to be caught at any time, by any methods by anyone.

Table 3. The time of fishing activities in Lubuk Lampam Floodplain

| Fishing gear used | Jan | Feb | Mar | Apr | Ma | June | July | Augu | Sept | Oct | Nop | Des |
|---------------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|----|------|------|------|------|-----|-----|-----|
| Simple fishing gear | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Hook & line | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Pot traps | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Cast net | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Large fishing gear | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Barrier trap | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Fyke net | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Filtering device A | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Filtering device B | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Active seine | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Active barrier | | | | | | | | | | | | |

Note :  Medium to high fishing intensity,  = low to medium fishing intensity

Filtering device A : *Empang*; Filtering device B : *Tuguk*

Relationship of water level to fish yield

Figure 6 showed the low fish yield from Lubuk Lampam floodplain during high water period (December-March), because the fishes in this floodplain are widely distributed resulting in low fishing success. When the water level started to decrease (April-June), the fish yield tends to decrease because the fishes started to move following decreasing water movement. During this time, the migrating fishes are easily to be capture using barrier traps, filtering device or Fyke net. Fishin^g yield reach its maximum during the drought period, when the water body in the floodplain contracted to its minimum where only the deepest parts of the floodplain such as floodplain pool (or *lebun^g*) and river segment still containing some water. During this period the fishes are effectively catch using active barrier (*Ngesek*) and active seine (*Ngesar*).

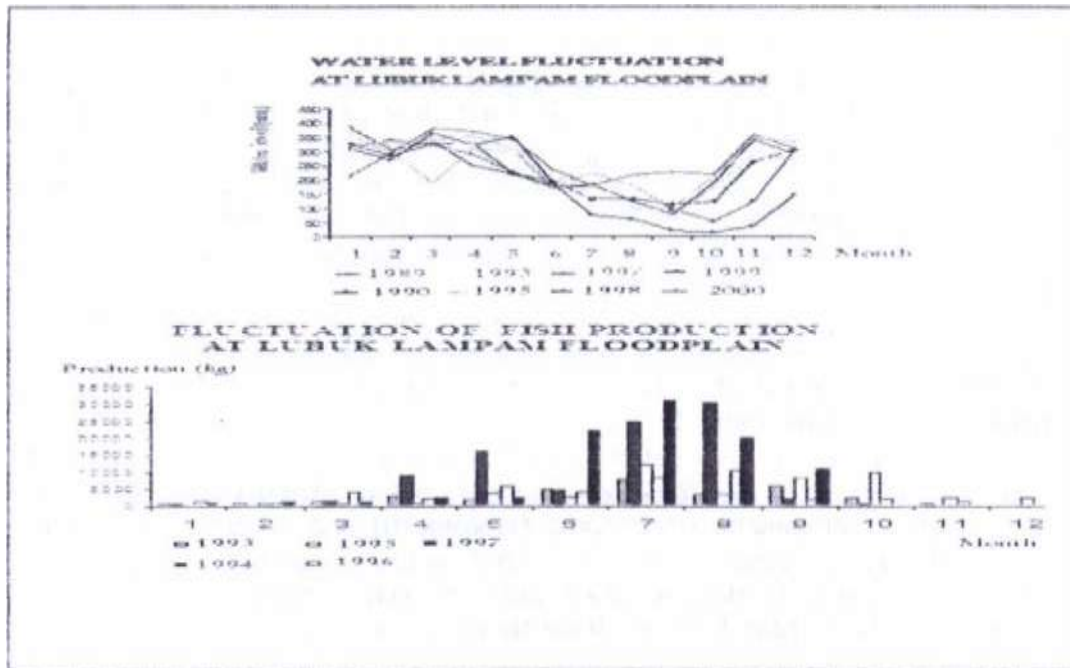


Figure 6. Water level and fish production of Lubuk Lampam floodplain South Sumatera

Catch composition

Appendix 1 showed that Tuguk is the main fishing gear that was used in the river segment of the floodplain and it can catch the fishes affectively from April to July when the water started to decrease. During this time the fishing shows rheotaxis response following the water current that flows own stream arid the fisher operating the Tuguk perpendicular to river bank cross cutting the fish migration path of the fishes. At the start of the dry season (August), cash netting was done in the river pools (Lubuk) and the activities refer to as Ngubek Lubuk. When the water level reach its minimum in September-October, fishing were done by guiding the fishes into the traps or fish picking site using seine (*Kerakat*). This fishing activity refers to ass *Ngesar*.

Fish catch composition of fishing activities in the river segment dominated by white fishes such as Lais (*Kryptopterus* spp.), Baung (*Mystus nemurus*). Tapa (Wallow spp), various small member of Cyprinidae family and others. One species of black fish that is the Toman (*Channa micropetites*) also could be catch in the river segment. The white water fishes during the high water period migrate to the floodplain for feeding and spawning but return back to river segmen when the water quality in the flooded grassland started to deteriorated (Welcomme 1979; Utomo dan Asyari 1999).

Appendix 2 to 4 indicate that Empang started¹ to chow some fish catch in June to July, when the water level started to decrease and the fishes move to deeper part of the floodplain habitat (floodplain pools and river pools). Empang was set cross cutting the migrating paths to trap the fishes. On the other hand when the water level reach its minimum, only the floodplain pools and river pools still containing water, the fishing activity were done by guiding the fishes towards the traps or picking up sites using bamboo fences (Empang). This fishing activity refers to as *Ngesek*.

Fishing activity using pot traps (Sengkirai) in general could be done whole years but the significant yield usually observed in April to June, In September, many parts of the flooded grassland already dried up so the yield from Sengkirai operation relatively very small (Appendix 3)

The composition of fish catch from flooded grass land mostly consisted of black-fish such as Betok (*Anabas testudineus*), Sepat (*Trichogaster* spp.), Gabus (*Channa striata*), Tambakang (*Helostoma temminckii*) and others. Black fishes can adapt to water quality condition characterized by low pH and low dissolved oxygen such usually found in

flooded grass land or swamp forest. Black fishes have additional respiratory organ that facilitate them to take oxygen directly from the air (Rankin & Jensen, 19993).

CONCLUSION

1. floodplain ecosystem is influenced by seasonal water level fluctuation, that is inundated in rainy season and experiencing drought in the dry season. The water quality of floodplains system is characterized by acidic, low dissolved oxygen and high level of carbon dioxide because decaying process in the flooded grassland. Water level fluctuation are strongly influenced the physico-chemico water quality of floodplains water.
2. Fish production from Lubuk Lampam floodplain is strongly influence by the seasonal water level fluctuation. The peak of fishing season occurs during the dry season. To sustain the stock, introduction of no take zone is recommended at the floodplain habitat such as floodplain pools or river segment

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