

nate habit of lumping widely disparate species into some sort of trophodynamic slush. This makes it difficult to discern the factors that may be involved in the regulation of single-species stocks of fish. A third group of marine biologists (sometimes also called biological oceanographers) is those who find it convenient to use as objects of study organisms that just happen to live in seawater. The molecular biochemistry of sea snake venom is an example of an effort in this last category.

Cushing wishes to meld the first two of these approaches and quite properly ignores the third. He correctly points out that no general theory of regulation seems to be emerging from the traditional approach of fisheries scientists and suggests some reasons. The main problem seems to be that, in a wide variety of stocks and species, there is a very poor relationship between size of spawning stock and subsequent recruitment of juveniles to the stock. Cushing has gathered together many data sets to plot recruitment as a function of spawning stock size. The resulting scatter diagrams (*J. Cons. Int. Explor. Mer* **33**, 340 [1971]) cover an expanse of paper that is mind-boggling. This can only mean that there are truly enormous variations in rates of larval mortality for given year classes, and the question is why. Cushing's point is that we are unlikely to get much insight into this problem from the study of the stock itself but rather should also investigate the ecology of fish larvae and the factors affecting their survival. He reviews a number of possible factors, among them variations in the match-up between spawning and larval drift on the one hand and the timing of the process of plankton production on the other, climatic events that may influence density-dependent processes at all ages, and changes in the nature of the biotic habitat due to variability in large-scale vertical and horizontal mixing.

Central to his arguments is the notion that there is competition for food among larvae and between larvae and other zooplankton. Changes in competition coefficients could, therefore, be invoked to account for the observed variation in larval survival, and herein lies the weakness in the book. It is by no means clear that planktonic systems are generally regulated by competitive interactions: predation seems to be at least equally important. Variations in predation rate, due perhaps to changes in type of predator, could be quite significant. Cushing cannot be accused of ignoring this aspect, however, for he does point out that some episodes of changing species structure of

the plankton seem to be associated with variations in larval abundance. These plankton changes are not merely some sort of perturbation of ordinary seasonal succession but rather are long-lasting structural changes in the community. This is not a serious flaw, for the reader can easily see this sort of evidence if that is what he is looking for.

Cushing's book should be read and his thesis discussed and debated. It is almost certain that we are on the verge of developing a general theory of marine community regulation, and his book is an important contribution to it.

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They are designed with a closed circuit, recirculating system that features a low cost cartridge-loading combination depth and membrane filter. Each cartridge will clean from 500 to 1000 gallons of tap water. Eastern Analytical Laboratories. Circle 682.

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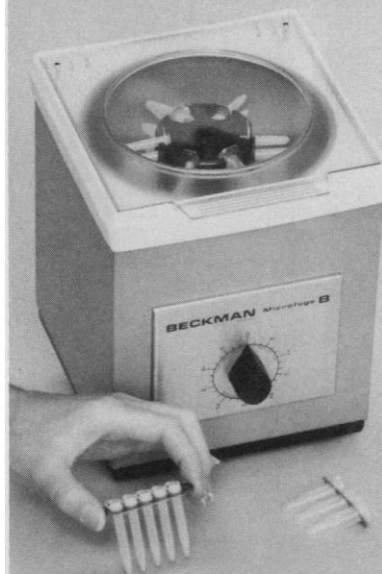
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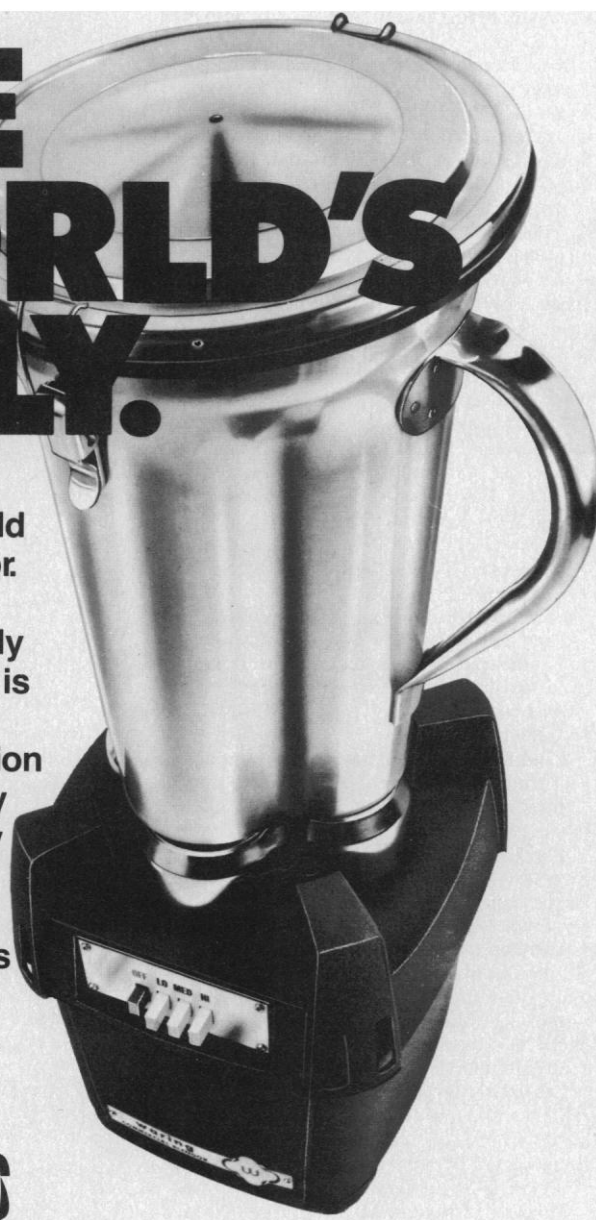
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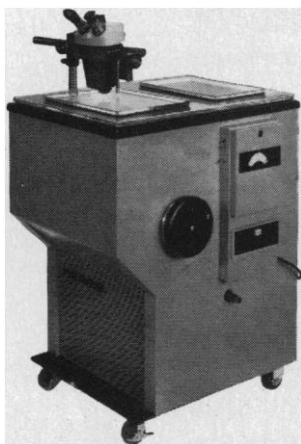
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