

**A SURVEY OF ECTOPARASITES IN FARMED NILE TILAPIA (*OREOCHROMIS NILOTICUS* L.) IN BRAZIL,
WITH DESCRIPTION OF PARASITE INTENSITY SCORE**

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Parasitic diseases are responsible for important economic losses in tilapia culture, favoring infections by opportunistic bacteria. We performed a parasitological study in 28 tilapia farms to investigate the cause of mortality in different culture cycle stages and we also describe the use of parasite intensity score. Parasitological analyses were performed in fish obtained from hatchery and grow out farms in different regions of Brazil. We diagnosed 20 parasite taxa in Nile tilapia cultured in ponds and net cages. Ciliate protozoa and Monogenea were the most prevalent groups of parasite in all Nile tilapia culture cycle stages, affecting all studied fish farms. On the other hand, parasites like *Myxobolus* sp., *Lamproglana monodi*, Lasidium larvae and Nematoda larvae had diagnosis restricted to some culture cycle stages and were detected in just a few farms. We verified that 84.2% of the diversity of parasite taxa diagnosed in the larvae, masculinization, juvenile and grow out stages were also present in the broodstock of hatchery farms. Therefore, we suggest that the main source for dissemination of the most prevalent parasites in tilapia culture are hatchery farms that provide parasitized juvenile to the further stages of the culture cycle.