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16945 - ROUTINE SWIMMING SPEED OF BLUEFIN TUNA LARVAE MEASURED IN THE LABORATORY

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Measurements of routine swimming speeds are useful to estimate the potential for dispersal corrected for active horizontal swimming behavior. Besides, swimming speeds can be used in foraging models to calculate visual ranges and clearance rates. In this study routine swimming speeds of planktivorous bluefin tuna larvae were measured in the laboratory. We have analysed differences in swimming speed among similar size larvae at three different times of the day: just after food was provided, four hours after first feeding and late in the evening prior to the offset of light. A video recorder was placed at a fixed distance of the wall covered with a calibrated paper to film freely swimming larvae that pass through the camera and the wall. In total, two and a half hours were filmed at intervals of 15 minutes. A total of 493 observations of larvae were recorded from which 360 observations were suitable to estimate swimming speeds. We discuss the application of recorded swimming speeds in foraging models developed for planktivorous bluefin tuna larvae.