Latin American Journal of Aquatic Research's Chief Editor

The manuscript entitled "Early anatomical development of the digestive system and high intestinal digestive enzyme activity in two pejerrey species, *Odontesthes bonariensis* and *O. hatcheri* (Atherinomorpha: Atherinopsidae)" is the product of original research. All coauthors consider that this work should be published because of the limited knowledge available on the digestive mechanisms of agastric fish, especially those with a short intestine such as the Atherinopsids. Thus, we report the results of integrative studies on the morphological and anatomical changes of the digestive system and intestinal digestive activities during the early larval and juvenile development, filling in crucial gaps of information for *O. bonariensis* and providing the first report for *O. hatcheri.* We show an exceptional early anatomical and functional development of the digestive system (by the end of the first week after hatching) in these species. A very high and sustained cytosolic activity of leucine alanine peptidase was also recorded. We suggest that these features may be a compensation for the inherent limitations of the agastric, short and thin intestine digestive systems. Our findings contribute to understanding the digestive mechanisms in atherinopsid fish and suggest that there is a potential for earlier and complete weaning in farming when fed with an appropriate species-specific diet.

This work does mention unpublished manuscripts of my own.

I would like to inform you that I and Dr. María Cristina Chávez Sánchez share the correspondence author position, although it would be me who oversees the submission.

E. Mayra Toledo Cuevas

Author responsible for submission