

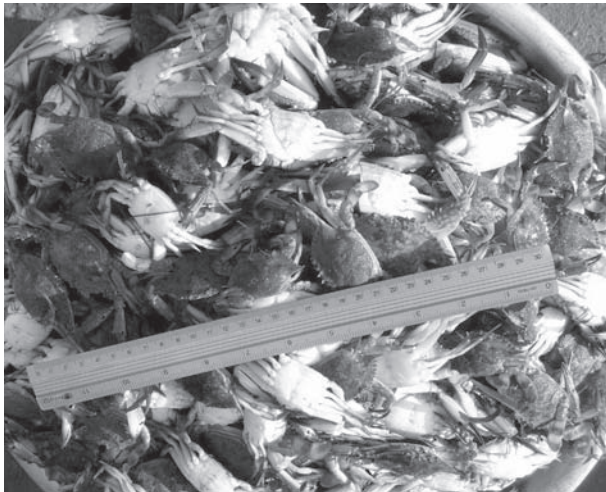
Note on the landings of crab juveniles by mini trawl net

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Landings of juveniles of *Portunus pelagicus* locally known as *olaikkal nandu* by mini trawl net were noticed at Devipattinam Landing Centre during March-April 2016 period. Commonly called flower crab, it is fished heavily being in high demand in domestic and foreign markets. The traditional crafts operating a gear locally known as *Thalluvalai* (mini trawl net) that fish upto 4 m depths were routinely landing the juvenile crabs during the period season. An estimated 300 kg of juvenile crabs were landed every day by the mini trawl nets operated off Devipattinam coast. Plank built boats, (OAL 25 to 30 feet) operated with sail have a group of 3-5 fishermen were involved in fishing. The gear is made

of high-density nylon filament with a stretched mesh of 20 mm with an overall length of 20 m. The net is operated in the inshore waters of Palk Bay with rich sea grass beds which serves as a nursery ground for the species. The catch comprised three different size groups of crabs of 30-60, 60-90 and 90-120 mm Carapace Wiedth (CW). Almost 80% of the catch was 30-60 mm CW sized and sold at the rate of ₹ 60 -70 per kg. The exploitation of juvenile crabs would invariably influence the landing of the big sized adult crabs that support the commercial fishery in this region. The growth overfishing of *P. pelagicus* by the mini trawl net in the Palk Bay needs to be studied for assessing its stock.



Juveniles of flower crab

