Emergence of blood clam fisheries off Mumbai coast

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Blood clam (*Tegillarca granosa*) lives in intertidal and shallow subtidal waters preferring muddy bottoms, mainly in protected bays and estuaries, or in mangroves with silty bottoms and low salinity. In India, it forms commercial fishery in Kakinada Bay in Andhra Pradesh (Narasimham, K.A. 1969, *J. Mar. Biol. Ass. India*, 20: 407-417). Thane Creek is an inlet in the shoreline of the Arabian sea off Mumbai where large-scale exploitation of blood clam has emerged during the recent past. The blood clam fishery near Mahul, Trombay and Darukhana which commenced in December 2017 lasted up to March 2018. They were harvested by hand picking in shallow areas and hand dredges operated from wooden canoes 10-15 feet overall length. Nearly 8-15 Fishers from Darukhana go for handpicking the class. In Mahul and Trombay the fishermen use a canoe, rowed by one while the others conduct dredging. Each hand pickers was getting about 30 kg catch. The catch from each canoe was 100-300 kg per day. The length range of blood clam caught was between 34.5 to 52.6 mm. Hand pickers sell the clams in local markets while canoes bring catch to New Ferry Wharf where agents procure it for supplying to Goa and on demand basis to hotels in Mumbai. The price varies from `30-60 per kilogram. As per fisher’s opinion the fishery is not regular but once every three years they are getting good catches of blood clam.

Abnormalities in Indian oil sardine


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Routine sampling of Indian oil Sardine, *Sardinella longiceps*, for biological studies was done. On 31st December, 2017, out of 61 specimens collected, one sardine with blunted snout (Fig. 1) and one with deformed caudal fin (Fig. 2) was observed.

Fig. 1. Indian oil sardine with deformed head region

Fig. 2. Indian oil sardine with deformed candal fin

Pre orbital region in one sardine specimen was deformed and formed a distorted upper jaw. Lower jaw also appeared more blunt than a normal specimen. The specimen was immature with total
Unusual feeding behaviour of Indian oil sardine

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The Indian oil sardine, *Sardinella longiceps* is a filter feeder, feeding mainly on plankton, particularly diatoms. They usefully feed on surface plankton and occasionally resort to bottom feeding (Bensam, 1964, *Indian J. Fish*, 11A (1): 377-390). In recent years, the presence of fish scales has become more common. Recently, during a biological sampling of 108 trawl caught oil sardines, collected on 4.1.2018 from the Puthiyappa Fisheries Harbour, a male specimen (stage II maturity stage, measuring 180 mm in TL and weighing 51 gm) with full gut condition had one *Bregmaceros* sp (45 mm) inside its gut (Fig. 1). Earlier also, observation on 11.6.2015 in which 30.4% of the ring net caught oil sardines, measuring 147 to 200 mm in TL, had 1 to 3 numbers of *Stolephorus* sp. in their guts (Fig. 2). The frequent occurrence of fish scales and the presence of fishes in the guts of oil sardines in recent years requires more detailed studies.

A note on the shoal of *Priacanthus hamrur* caught during experimental trawling

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During the experimental fishing conducted by FV *Silver pompano* on 10th November 2016, a shoal of bullseye *Priacanthus hamrur*, weighing 1.5 t, was caught at 65-70 m depth off Alappuzha coast (9° 25' 51" N, 75° 58' 49" E). The shrimp trawl net with cod end mesh size of 20 mm was operated for an