A note on heart urchins and sand dollars washed ashore

S. Gomathy, S. Selvanidhi and P. Laxmilatha
Madras Research Centre of ICAR-Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute, Chennai
*e-mail: gomathycmfri@gmail.com

Large quantities of fragile skeletons (Tests) of heart urchins and sand dollars were found washed ashore in Mudaliar kuppam, village and Pudukuppam village of Villupuram district during September 2017. Out of hundreds of broken skeletons as well as a few intact pieces washed ashore, *Maretia planulata* (Tiny maretia heart urchin) and *Echinodiscus bisperforatus* (Keyhole sand dollar) were identified. Sand dollars are collected for making souvenirs, curios and aquarium trade. Collection of live specimens is illegal.

Heavy landing of juveniles of threadfin breams

Livi Wilson, T.M. Najmudeen, P.U. Zacharia and P.K. Seetha
ICAR-Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute,
*e-mail: liviwilson@gmail.com

Threadfin breams are a commercially important group of marine fishes in India. *Nemipterus randalli* locally known as ‘kilimeen’ or ‘Puthiyapalakara’ is the most abundant species contributing 53.5 % of threadfin bream landings in Kerala. A fisheries resources assessment survey was conducted at seven landing centers viz., Cochin fisheries harbour, Munambam fisheries harbour, Munambam mini harbour, Kalamukku, Chellanam, Murikuppadam and Fort Kochi landing centers for three months during December 2016 - February 2017. Sizeable landings of juvenile fishes were noticed at all the landing centres with a high occurrence at the Munambam mini harbour. Juvenile landings at this centre were confined mainly to *Nemipterus randalli* caught by multiday trawlers, operating at depth range of 60-150 m. The duration of the fishing of multiday trawlers operating from these centers varies from 5 to 15 days. The overall length of the crafts were 13-18 meters with engine of 110 HP to
Rare occurrence of hairtail blenny

Swapnil Tandel, Vaibhav D. Mhatre, K. V. Akhilesh* and Veerendra Veer Singh

Mumbai Research Centre of ICAR-Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute
*email: akhilkv@gmail.com

During an experimental fishery and oceanography survey conducted at 40 m depth off Ratnagiri, a single specimen of hairtail blenny, *Xiphasia setifer* Swainson, 1839 (345 mm TL, 15 g) was collected on 18th November 2016. This demersal, with an eel like body is marine gobiid fish (family blennidae), found in burrows along soft-mud bottom habitats in coastal waters. The species is very rarely encountered in fishery and hence meristic and morphometric counts were taken (Table 1, Fig. 1).

The estimated economic loss calculated due to the juvenile landing of *Nemipterus randalli* during December 2016 to February 2017 at the Munambam mini harbour using a bio-economic model is presented in Table 1. Most of the juvenile fishes were transported to Mangalore in Karnataka and sold to fertilizer and fish meal plants for ₹ 30-35 per kg. The juveniles exploited are the new recruits in the fishery and hence their indiscriminate exploitation will be disastrous to the fishery in the long run.

**Table 1.** Estimated economic loss due to juvenile fishing of *Nemipterus randalli* at Munambam mini harbor

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Months</th>
<th>December 2016</th>
<th>January 2017</th>
<th>February 2017</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Juvenile landing (in tonnes)</td>
<td>295.86</td>
<td>912.83</td>
<td>381.41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Estimated economic loss (₹ in lakhs)</td>
<td>80.91</td>
<td>249.65</td>
<td>104.31</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Fig. 1. Hairtail blenny, *Xiphasia setifer* (345 mm TL)