

Unusual landings of deepwater bandfish along Chennai coast

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Large volumes of *Acanthocepola* Bleeker, 1874 landing by mechanized single day trawlers and motorized fibre glass boats were observed at Chennai Fisheries Harbour and Kovalam Landing Centre in Chennai respectively during the month of August and September, 2019. In single day mechanised trawlers operated in 12km north off Chennai at a depth of 18m total landings between 6th and 13th August, 2019 were an estimated 1200 kg. The size range was 270-470mm with dominant mode at 340-360mm. The individual fish weight ranged between 57-112g with a mean weight of 78g. Landing of the same species was observed in Kancheepuram, Villupuram, Puducherry and Cuddalore districts during the same period. Increased sea water upwelling during this period that resulted in increased turbidity (locally called "Vandalthanni"). During that time the deep water fish like band fish were appearing in fishing zones and catches in large quantities along with other fishes was reported. Earlier reports on the landing of the *Acanthocepola* sp. in large quantities was during the month of August- September 1987 by motorized fibre boats operated in shallow waters at Panayurkuppam, Chennai and in September-November, 2006 period by multiday trawlers at Madras Fisheries Harbour, Chennai (Rajapackiam *et al.*, 2008 *Mar. Fish. Infor. Serv., T & E Ser.*, 195: 20). This species is otherwise rarely occurring in the marine fisheries of the coast.



Fig. 1. *Acanthocepola* sp size range in the landings at Chennai Fisheries Harbour