

Heavy landings of Black pomfret post lockdown



Following the outbreak of COVID-19 pandemic there was a complete lockdown in the fisheries harbours and the fish landing centres in India for more than two months which affected fishing operations and fishers' livelihoods. The triple lockdown enforced in the Thiruvananthapuram district of Kerala affected fishing activities in all of the major fishing harbours like Thazhampally, Perumathura, Anjengo, Vizhinjam etc. as these were in the containment zone and only after 07/08/2020, the fishing activities resumed. During the period in the end of month of May end and early June, several fishery resources including Indian oil sardine *Sardinella longiceps* landed along the coast. However, soon thereafter the entire coastal

belt was affected by the pandemic and with the announcement of a lockdown by the government, fishing activities stopped. Post-lockdown, a lot of unusual landings were recorded including that of Black pomfret (*Parastromateus niger*) and Seerfishes (*Scomberomorus* spp.). Unusual heavy landings of black pomfret at Marianad Landing Centre, on 19 August, 2020 were reported. Thirty two boat seiners reportedly caught 500 to 3200 kg of black pomfret which were sold at the rate of ₹ 210 to 350 per kg. The catch was auctioned for ₹ 800000. Similar unusual landing of *P. niger* was reported at Anjengo (N) Landing Centre on the very same day and the maximum auctioned price per boat was ₹ 1400000. Similar landings

occurred during September and October 2020. Black pomfret catch of 1000 -2000kg and 2000-4000kg was recorded by boat seines and ring seines respectively at Thazhampally and Perumathura fisheries harbours. The fishes caught were in the length range of 14 - 39 cm with mean size at 32 cm and weighing 86 - 1340g each. The recommended Minimum Legal Size (MLS) for landings of *P. niger* along the Kerala coast is 17 cm total length (TL) and more than 90 % of the catch landed was above MLS. The catch was marketed locally and also transported to neighbouring districts.

(S. Surya*, Albert Idu, J. M. Ponni, H. Jose Kingsly, K. K.Suresh and M. K.Anil |
*Vizhinjam Regional Centre of ICAR-CMFRI)