

Fishing with Gargoor traps in the Gulf of Mannar

Fish traps often used for the exploitation of demersal reef fishes have low impacts on the habitat. They are passive fishing gears with enclosures to which fishes are lured or guided and escape is made difficult using labyrinths or retarding devices



like funnels or similar construction. In the Gulf of Mannar and Palk Bay fish traps made of bamboo or plastic-coated wire mesh, locally known as 'koodu' are extensively used for perch fishery. During field visit, numerous metal wire weaved traps placed in the Mookaiyur fishing harbour were found and further enquiry among the fishermen revealed that a person who worked in Iran has adapted the Gargoor trap technology used to catch fish in the Persian Gulf and Oman Sea. The trap weaved with metal wire (Number 18) in a basket shape (semi-sphere) has three parts: body, bottom and a semi-conical entrance of 1.2 m height, 2 m diameter and 35-60 mm mesh

size. Two steel pipes are additionally tied in the bottom to sink the traps. The door of the gargoor (diameter 65-78 cm) functions as a one-way funnel and fishes are unable to get out of the trap due to its design. The traps are placed at 10-30 fathoms in a sandy/clayey bottom for 4-6 days and demersal fishes such as groupers, lethrinids, parrotfish, snappers and surgeonfish mainly constitute the catch in the traps. Normally 4-5 members are involved in this fishing operation. The cost of a trap is ₹2800 which lasts for about 7 months.

Reported by M. Rajkumar*, S. Thirumalaiselvan and R. Vinothkumar |
Mandapam Regional Centre of ICAR-Central
Marine Fisheries Research Institute