

Unusual heavy landing of cephalopods from Vizhinjam coast

Unusual landing of cephalopods was observed along the Vizhinjam coast during the period between 25.7.2022 to 28.7.2022. On 25.7.2022, about 170-180 boats operated along the Vizhinjam coast 25-35 km from the shore at a depth range of 30- 40 fathoms, landed an estimated 15 tonnes of cephalopods. The catch was composed mainly of cuttlefish *Sepia pharaonis* locally known as thondikanava (Kallan kanava) and the octopus *Amphioctopus marginatus* locally known as peikanava (Neerali). Cuttlefish and octopus landing at Vizhinjam are of high quality as they are caught using either hook and line or jigs and hence command good market prices. An average catch of 30-280 kg/unit was recorded from outboard FRP boats (OAL-7.2-9.6 m) fitted with the double engine of

maximum of 25 hp which operated jigs. On 26.7.2022, about 130-140 boats were operated and the estimated landing was about 12 tons. During the month of July in the previous year estimated monthly landing of *S. pharaonis* was only 6.4 tons and cephalopods landings of Vizhinjam harbour was 55.5 tons

The cuttlefish landings comprised adults of sizes 16.5 cm to 27.5 cm Mantle Length (ML) and weighed between 0.350 kg to 1.45 kg each whereas the octopus caught were in the size range of 8-11cm (ML) and weighed between 150 to 300 g. Recommended Minimum Legal Size (MLS) for *S. pharaonis* along the Kerala coast is 11 cm and the catch landed were above MLS. The cuttlefish were sold at the rate of

₹400-450/- per kilogram.

Octopus was earlier brought to the landing centre but in lesser quantity. Since June 2021 octopus is being landed in Vizhinjam harbour in large quantities due to the increased demand for the octopus from seafood companies which offer ₹230-270/- per kg at the landing centre. Earlier with no demand from the seafood companies it had fetched only low price and therefore, fishermen usually discarded the octopus catch at sea. A major portion of the cephalopod catch is being auctioned and sold to seafood companies.

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