

Unusual landings of Terapons

Terapons belonging to the family Teraponidae, are widely found in the Indo-west Pacific region. They

are locally known as "Karvanda," "Naver" and "Hajam" in Maharashtra. Terapons are usually known to inhabit



inshore marine, brackish waters and some species also enter the freshwater ecosystems. The adults spawn in deeper waters while the juveniles move to the shallow sandy bottom area near the estuarine habitat and inshore areas. Off about 62 species known globally only 5 species such as *Mesopristes elongatus*, *Pelates quadrilineatus*, *Terapon jarbua*, *Terapon puta* and *Terapon theraps* are known from western Indian Ocean. Terapons are mostly caught by artisanal fishers in coastal waters and none of the species form major landings or part of a commercial fishery. On November 24, 2022, an unusual landing of around 8-tonnes of terapons namely *Terapon theraps* (98%), *Terapon puta* (1.2%) and *Terapon jarbua* (0.3%) was observed in the purse seiners catch in the Sassoon Dock landing centre, Mumbai, Maharashtra. Other species such as Indian mackerel (*R. kanagurta*), carangids (*Decapterus russelli*; *Alepes kleinii*) etc. also formed the catch in the purse seines landed. On inquiry from fishers revealed that purse seiners were operated off the Mumbai coast at depths ranging from 30-40 m. Terapons formed around 95-98% of the low-value bycatch (LVB) landing on the particular day; other species contributing to low-value bycatch (LVB) were scads and juveniles of Indian mackerels. *Terapon theraps* constituted mostly adults whose size and weight ranged from 91 to 301 mm and 10 to 378 g respectively, with a dominance of 155-225 mm TL size groups. Terapons catch was sold at ₹16 per kg to the supplier of the fish meal plants located at Taloja, Mumbai.

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