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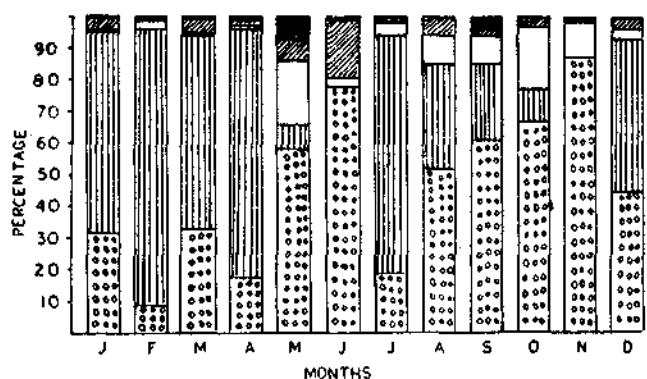
ON SEASONAL ABUNDANCE OF THREADFIN BREAMS OFF VISAKHAPATNAM COAST*

During 1982-'87 almost in every year heavy catches of *Nemipterus mesoprion* used to occur for short periods, the bulk of the catches being in January-April.

Fishery

Nemipterids contributed 10-12% of total catches of private mechanised boats which operated shrimp trawls off Visakhapatnam and the catches were landed at the Visakhapatnam Fisheries Harbour. *Nemipterus japonicus*, *N. mesoprion*, *N. delagoae*, *N. luteus* and *N. tolu* were the species caught. Out of these, *N. mesoprion* and *N. japonicus* contributed 51 and 45% of total nemipterid catches respectively.

Seasonal abundance of different species of nemipterids is shown in Fig. 1. It is seen that during the period January-April, *N. mesoprion* dominated in



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Fig. 1. Seasonal abundance of different species of nemipterids for the period 1984-'86.

the catches contributing to more than 50% of nemipterid catches and *N. japonicus* was second in importance.

The average catch per hour of nemipterids is shown in Fig. 2. During January–April, the CPH values increased from 3.11 to 10.53 kg/hr but decreased to 7.55 kg/hr in May. During June–September, the values fluctuated from 0.48 to 1.82 kg/hr but from October to December the values increased from 1.35 to 2.26 kg/hr.

Biological observations

The total length of *N. mesoprion* varied from 40 to 170 mm with more than 50% of fish measuring 100–150 mm. Stomach analysis of the samples revealed that on an average 16% of the guts were full, 18% were 3/4 full, 21% half full and the remaining 44% were 1/4 full. The major food items were, bony fishes, prawns shrimps and crabs.

Maturity studies indicated that the ovaries were in mature and ripe condition during January–April. The percentage of males was more than that of the females.

Remarks

N. mesoprion was a major contributor to the demersal catches of private trawlers (Fig. 3). The seasonal abundance of *N. mesoprion*, which coincided with that of *Decapterus russelli* and *Psenes indicus* during March–April, suggests that the species enters the fishing grounds during the period of upwelling and the shoals later move away from the fishing grounds.

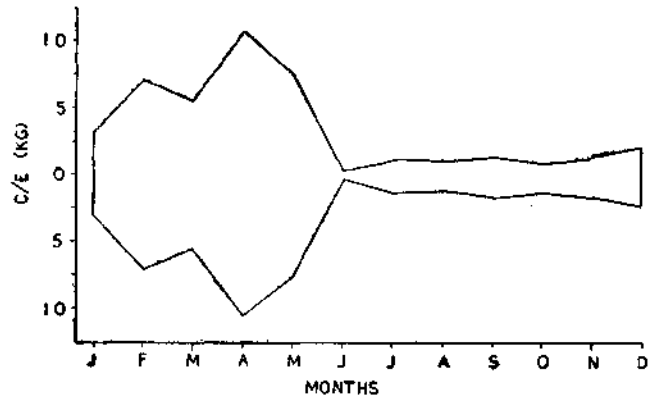


Fig. 2. The monthly catch per hour values of nemipterids for the period 1982-'86.



Fig. 3. Heaps of Threadfin breams landed at Visakhapatnam Fisheries Harbour.

