



MARINE FISHERIES INFORMATION SERVICE

**TECHNICAL AND
EXTENSION SERIES**

No.36
March 1982

**CENTRAL MARINE FISHERIES RESEARCH INSTITUTE
COCHIN, INDIA**

INDIAN COUNCIL OF AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH

ILLEGAL FISHING IN INDIAN WATERS

As reported in September issue of Marine Fisheries Information Service, poaching by foreign vessels in India's Exclusive Economic Zone, particularly in the northern part of the Bay of Bengal, has become a grave problem. Five Thailand trawlers including one mother vessel were captured on 18-11-1981 by Indian coast guard from the sea close to the mouth of the river Ganges, 18 miles south of Sandhead. The crew of these vessels, 107 in number, were arrested and subsequently released on bail. The catch, mostly shrimps, was confiscated and handed over to Apex Co-operative Society of West Bengal.

Operations of Thai trawlers were reported by fishermen from Contai and Balasore coast. The number of trawlers operating in this area during 1981-82 are reported to be 75 to 100 and sometimes they are found to fish even at a distance of 30 km from the shore at depths 40-45 m. These operations close to the shore cause damages to the drift nets operated in these waters by local fishermen. These drift nets, varying in sizes from 3,200 to 4,800 ft long cost Rs. 20,000 to 30,000. From Digha area some of the fishermen have reported loss of their nets due to the operation of these trawlers. Large quantities of dead fish of different varieties floating in the waters in these areas indicate that these boats only keep

the shrimp catch and throw away the by-catches, thereby wasting the resources.

The skippers of Indian trawlers operating in this area often complain about the foreign trawlers that they do not abide by international rules, moving in zigzag routes and without navigational lights in the night. Shri G. Mayabhan, skipper of trawler 'Sunita Rani' reported to his base at Visakhapatnam about citing 40 Thai trawlers operating along the coast between Sandhead and Dhamra river on 2-10-1981. The skipper of another trawler "Blue Angel" Shri C. M. A. Rashid reported to Visakhapatnam about seeing 30-40 Thai trawlers fishing at 40-45 m depth region in between Sandhead and Paradeep.

These foreign trawlers are mostly 25 m to 50 m in length and equipped with powerful radars, which help detection of Indian coast guard vessels at very long distance and enable escape to waters of neighbouring countries or deeper areas. With the limited number of patrol vessels and equipments at its disposal the coast guard is trying its best to cope up with the situation and the capture of these 5 vessels is an indication of the surveillance and vigilance kept by them.

Reported by S. S. Dan.

