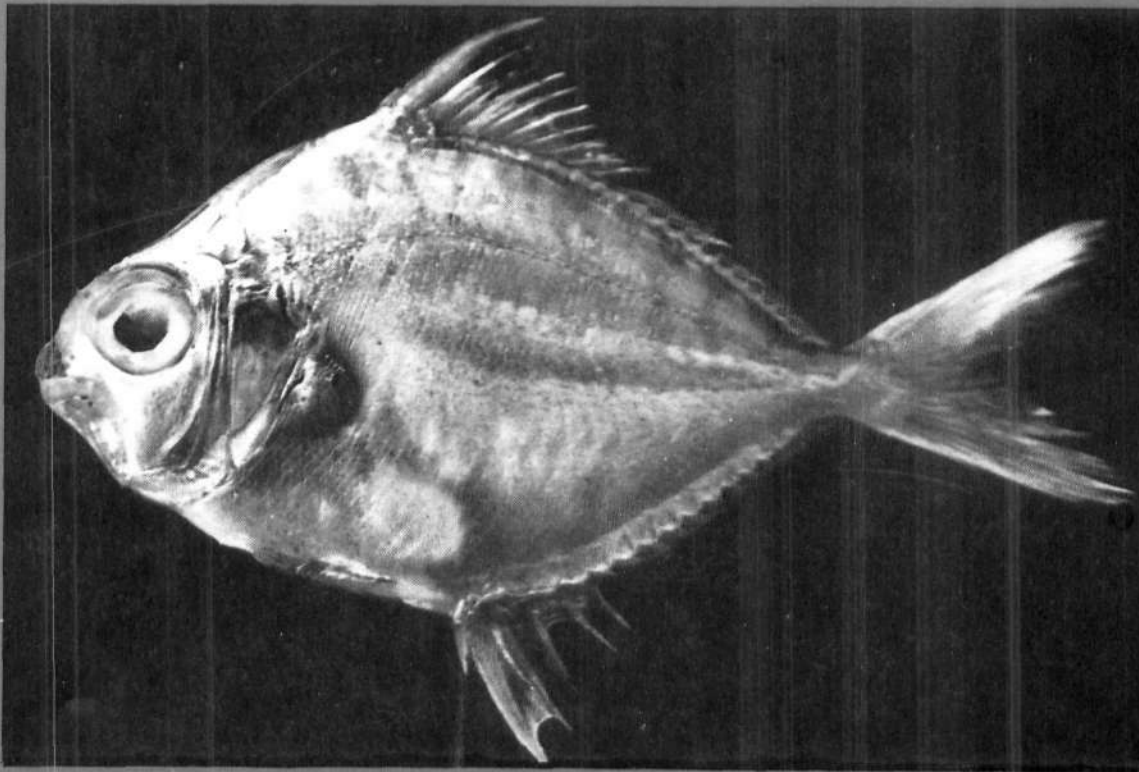




# समुद्री मात्स्यिकी सूचना सेवा MARINE FISHERIES INFORMATION SERVICE

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केन्द्रीय समुद्री मात्स्यिकी CENTRAL MARINE FISHERIES  
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INDIAN COUNCIL OF AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH

## ON THE EMERGING FISHERY OF MACKEREL SCAD, *DECAPTERUS MACARELLUS* FROM VIZHINJAM\*

The carangids which constitute a major fishery at Thiruvananthapuram coast is represented by a variety of species. The scad (genus *Decapterus*) is the most abundant group of carangids in the area and is constituted chiefly by two species viz. *Decapterus russelli* and *D. macrosoma*. Even though the occurrence of mackerel scad, *Decapterus macarellus* was reported from Vizhinjam area by Sreenivasan (*Indian J. Fish.*, 23, (1 & 2) : 41-56, 1976), it was landed only in stray numbers prior to the introduction of motorised traditional crafts. These crafts have helped in the expansion of fishing grounds from nearshore areas to slightly distant grounds. Consequently exploitation of certain resources like tunas, perches and carangids has been improved. The emerging fishery of *Decapterus macarellus* (Fig.1) is one among them.

### *D. macrosoma*

Caudal fin hyaline to dusky  
Maximum fork length rarely exceeds 25 cm  
Scales on top of head do not extend forward to beyond posterior margin of pupil

Posterior end of upper jaw concave above, rounded and produced below

### *D. macarellus*

Caudal fin yellow-green  
Fishes upto 33 cm fork length are common  
Scales on top of head extend forward to anterior margin of pupil

Posterior end of upper jaw straight above, moderately rounded and slanted anteroventrally

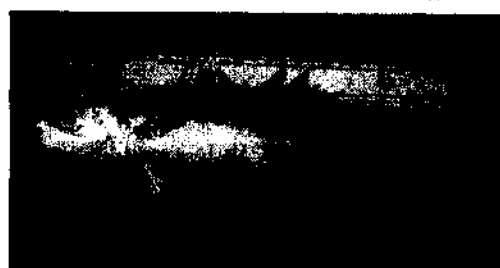


Fig. 1. The mackerel scad, *Decapterus macarellus*.

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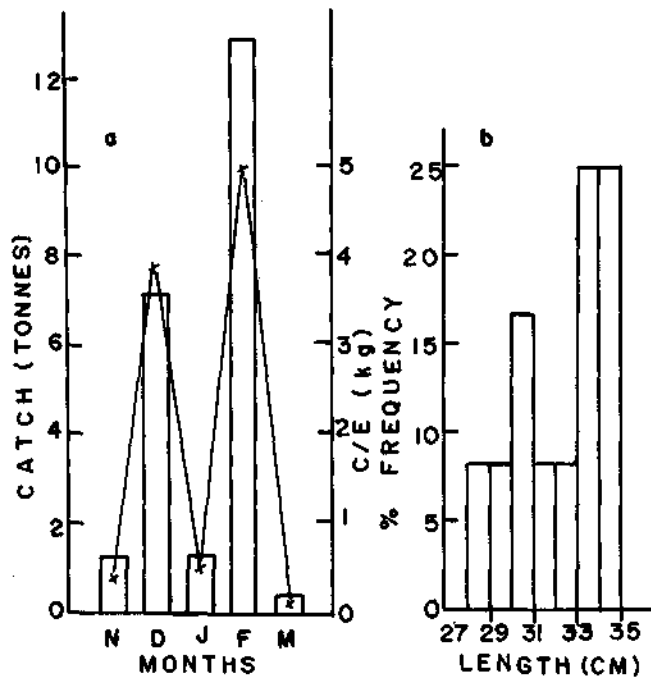


Fig. 2a. Monthwise catch (tonnes) and catch rate (kg) of *Decapterus macarellus* in drift net operated from motorised crafts.

Fig. 2b. Size composition of *Decapterus macarellus* in the drift net fishery.

A total of 26.5 tonnes of *D. macarellus* was landed during 1990-'91. The season of the fishery was November-March, with a peak during February (Fig. 2a). The fish was caught mainly by drift nets and the bulk (88%) was landed by the gear operated from motorised crafts. The area of fishing was between 40 and 60 m depth. The fish ranged in total length from 28 to 35 m (Fig. 2b). The fishes examined were in maturity stages IV and V.

The emerging fishery of *D. macarellus* in recent years due to the exploitation of deeper fishing grounds by the motorised crafts is an indication of the availability of this species in the non-traditional fishing grounds. However, the resource potential, distribution, biological and population characteristics of this commercially important species need to be studied.

Often *D. macarellus* is confused with *D. macrosoma*. The following diagnostic characters could be employed for distinguishing the species in the field.