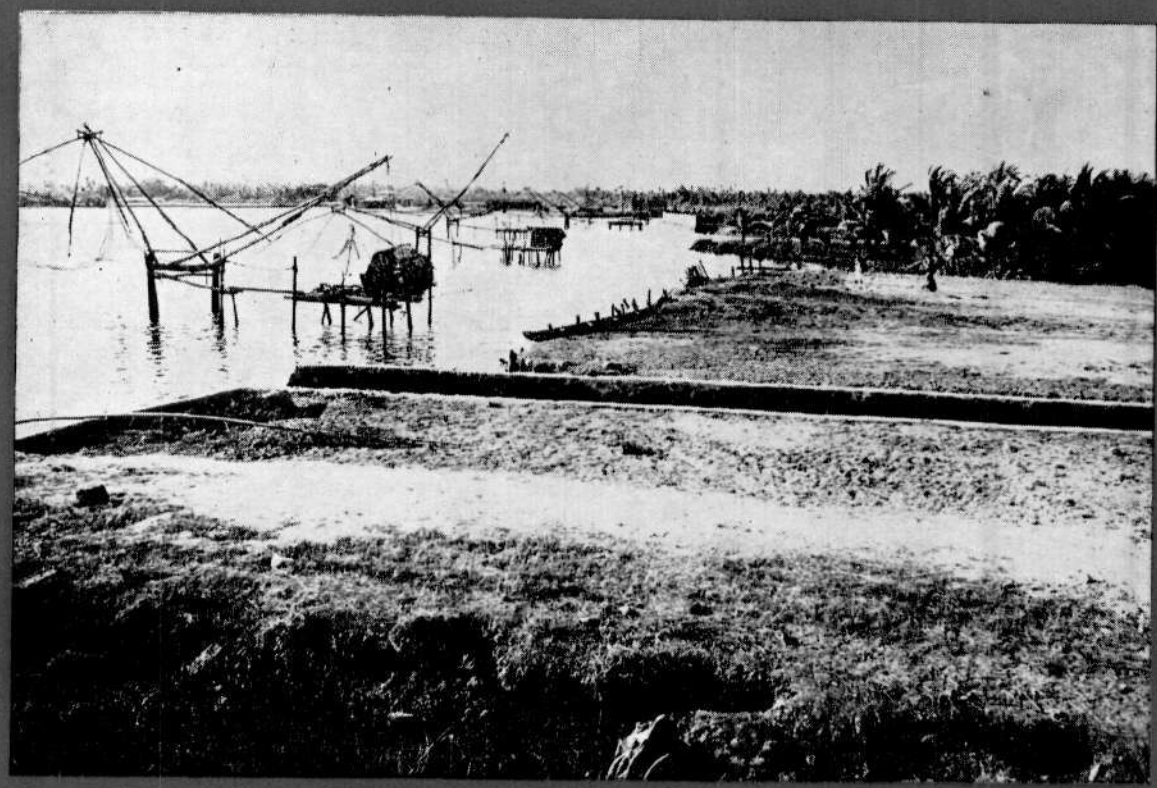




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ON AN UNUSUAL LANDING OF CAT FISH *ARIUS CAELATUS* (CUVIER AND VALENCIENNES) AT RAMESWARAM VERKOTTIL, TAMILNADU*

Pillai and Sathiadas (*Mar. Fish. Infor. Serv., T & E Ser.*, No. 39: 1982) described the two boat, high opening trawl for pair trawling operations recently introduced at Rameswaram and Mandapam area under the Bay of Bengal Programme. They reported good fishery for rainbow sardines and white pomfrets in the Palk Bay. According to them catfish contributes 9.32% forming an important subsidiary catch in the pair trawl gear. In this connection an unusual instance of the landing of cat fish *Arius caelatus* was observed on 19-1-'84 and the same is recorded in this note.

A total of five pair-trawl units were operated in fishing area, 9/79-3C in Palk Bay on 19-1-'84 from 0430 hrs to 1900 hrs. The H. P. of these boats ranged from 53.9 to 68.0, length from 9.2 to 9.8 m and the

number of crew from 5 to 6 per boat. The trawling speed was about 2.5 knots.

The unusual catch of seven tonnes of cat fish was obtained in a single haul by one of the units operated by two STC boats, each with 68 H.P. diesel engine and length of 9.8 m. The catch was taken around 0630 hrs. About four tonnes of the catch were hauld on board from the net and the remaining portion of the catch was impounded in the net till bringing to the shore.

The composition and average quantity of catch of the five units in the areas were *Arius caelatus* 1,400 kg, *Dussumieria acuta* 300 kg, *Pampus argenteus* 80 kg, *Pellona* sp. 20 kg, *Caranx* spp. 15 kg, silver-bellies 8 kg and other fishes 10 kg. The total length of *Arius caelatus* in the unusual catch ranged from 275 to 300 mm and the weight from 1.2 to 1.5 kg.

*Reported by S. Subramani, Regional Centre of CMFRI, Mandapam Camp.

Four tonnes of the cat fish catch was iced and sent to markets at Madurai and Coimbatore in fresh condition. The remaining three tonnes were salted and pit-cured. The price of iced fish was Rs. 1.60 per kg and that of salted fish Rs. 2.50 per kg.

Bumper catches of 3.0 and 4.5 tonnes of cat fish were landed on 16-2-'82 and 10-3-'82 respectively at the same landing centre by pair trawl units. From second week of January, 1984 onwards trial fishing using pair trawl gear was taken up by some fishermen in anticipation of good pomfret fishery in February. However, the present unusual fishery was encountered in one such trial fishing operation. In subsequent days,

trial fishing did not yield any good catch. But on 2-2-'84 a catch of one tonne of cat fish was brought by one unit.

The cause for the present unusual fishery is not known. The sky was clear and the sea calm, the wind was westward and the current northward. Instances of unusual bumper catches for catfish are locally reported to be a new feature after introduction of pair trawl in these areas.

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