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The details of catch from shallow and deeper regions during March, 1999 are presented in Table1.

TABLE 1. Details of catch of *P. pelagicus* from bottom set gill nets from shallow and deeper areas during March, 1999

| Particulars | Shallow | Deeper |
|-------------------------------|---------|---------|
| Distance from shore | 4 km | 10 km |
| Catch in kg | 6.129 | 9609 |
| CPUE in kg | 14.39 | 29.66 |
| Size range in mm : Males | 92-140 | 130-190 |
| Females | 83-199 | 132-195 |
| Percentage of berried females | 5.06 | 28.34 |
| Price per kg in Rs. | 30 | 100 |

From the above Table it is evident that the boats operated in the deeper grounds got better catches and large sized crabs than the boats operated in the shallow waters. It is also seen that the price realised for the catch from the deeper grounds was more because of the bigger size of the crabs.

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928 Heavy landing of the reticulate crab at Tharuvaikulam, southeast coast of India

The reticulate crab *Portunus pelagicus* (Linnaeus) forms a major fishery of economic importance in Tharuvaikulam area near Tuticorin. Observations on the crab fishery during the period April 1997 - March 1999 reveal that there is a good resource of this swimming crab in the inshore waters near Tuticorin.

During March, 1999 heavy landings of the species was recorded from the 30 m depth zone (10 km from the coast). The gear used was a special type of bottom set gill net of 100 mm mesh size made of thick nylon filament. The fishing ground was highly productive when compared to the shallow grounds. During March, 1999 fishing operations were carried out near the shore also.

The present fishing ground is situated within the limits of trawl fishing grounds where the other fishermen do not operate their bottom set gill nets due to social ban. Since there was no trawling activity in March '99 in this fishing ground due to the maintenance work of the fishing harbour, the fishermen could operate their nets. There is a good prospect of developing this crab fishery.

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