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UNUSUALLY HIGH LANDINGS OF SOME PENAEID PRAWNS AT BOMBAY*

New Ferry wharf is an important trawl landing centre in Greater Bombay, forming the base of operation for nearly 400 boats, most of which make 3-4 day trips in an area about 200 km north and south of Bombay. In general in the year April 1982 to March 1983 larger quantities of prawns were landed at the centre in comparison to previous years.

Very heavy landings of particularly two species of penaeid prawns have been reported from this centre, especially in October and November 1982. One of the prawns is *Metapenaeus monoceros* which is a conventional species represented in the prawn fishery of Bombay waters, occupying fourth place in abundance in the fishery in previous years. Heavy landings of this species occurred during the fortnight beginning from the last week of October, contributing to nearly two thirds of the total landings of 2,027 tonnes of the species for the year and raising the species to the second rank in abundance. The catch per fishing trip at this time was 500-900 kg. Similar catches of the species (about 1000 kg per trip) have also been reported from Sassoon Dock, another landing centre in Greater Bombay (personal communication from Shri

K.B.Waghmare). During this time the area of fishing is reported to be off Harnai about 130 km south of Bombay in 60-75 m depth zone. The sizes represented in these heavy catches ranged from 78 to 183 mm in total length with proportion of females more than twice that of males.

The other species which contributed to heavy landings, especially in the first and third weeks of October is *Metapenaeopsis stridulans*, which has never been earlier reported in such large quantities in the prawn fishery of Bombay. About 75% of the annual catch of 536 tonnes of the species in the year has been landed during this period. The catch per boat trip for the species at the time averaged to 140 kg. This is a small species ranging in size from 48 to 93 mm in total length.

The value of these two species is estimated at 91 and 2 million rupees respectively for the entire year. Nearly 70% of this value has been realised from the heavy catches occurring during October-November.

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