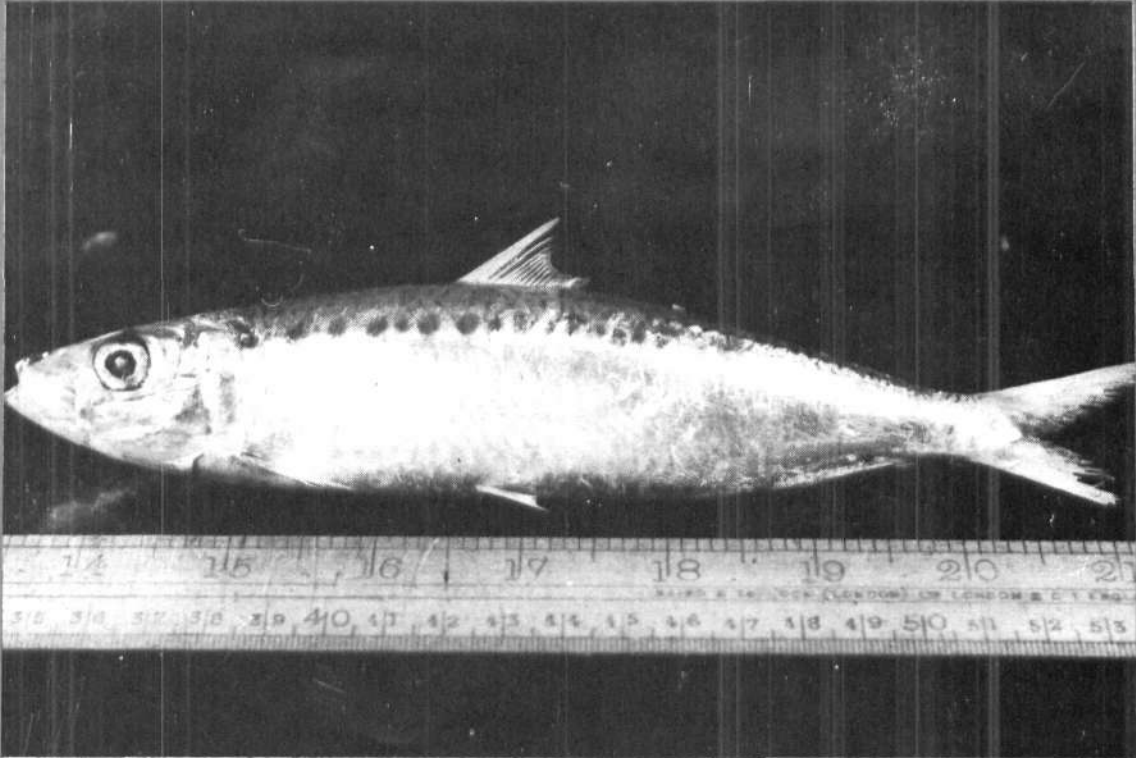




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INDIAN COUNCIL OF AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH

## HEAVY LANDINGS OF MACKEREL BY TRAWLERS AT MANGALORE BUNDER\*

The Indian mackerel, *Rastrelliger kanagurta* generally comprises less than 2% of the total annual trawl catch. But unusually heavy landings of mackerel, upto one tonne per unit formed nearly 30% of the total trawl catch during May 1995 (18th - 27th).

The trawlers operating along the Mangalore coast usually stay out at sea for 3 - 5 days and fish mainly for prawns and cuttlefishes. Mackerel are landed in small quantities with a catch rate of 10-25 kg per unit. This year, the unusually heavy landings during the reported period increased the average catch per boat to 252 kg. The catch, effort and the catch per unit effort for mackerel at Mangalore Bunder during the observation period are given in Table 1. Such a steep increase of mackerel in the trawler catch along this coast is recorded for the first time.

TABLE 1. Effort (trawl units), catch and catch per unit effort of mackerel (kg) at Mangalore Bunder during 18th - 27th May 1995

Date	Effort (Units)	Total catch	Mackerel catch	C.P.U.E
18.5.95	92	1,06,746	12,512	136
20.5.95	80	1,02,560	18,000	225
23.5.95	65	85,267	29,575	455
24.5.95	70	80,850	22,050	315
27.5.95	80	86,360	15,440	193
Total	387	4,61,783	97,577	252

The catch comprised of only large sized fishes with their total length ranging from 180 to 255 mm. Modes were seen at 200, 220 and 230 mm (Fig.1). The fishes mainly belonged to the 1+ yr group with a dominance of females (52%) over the males. All the fishes landed were either in the ripe (15%) or partially spent (85%) stage which indicates their peak spawning period.

However, there was no corresponding increase of mackerel in the purse seines and the gill nets. The heavy catches were observed only at Mangalore Bunder.

The unusually heavy landings led to the crash in the price of mackerel at Mangalore as sufficient ice was not available

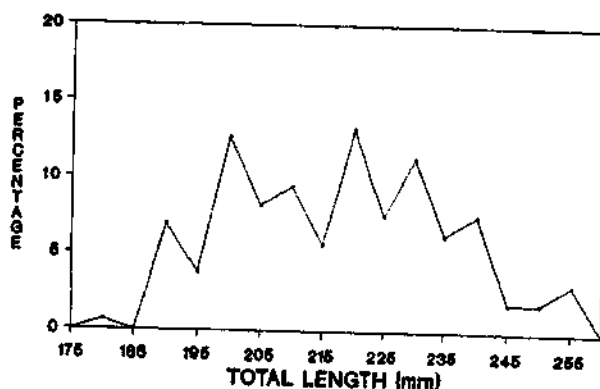


Fig. 1. Length frequency distribution of mackerel landed by trawlers at Mangalore Bunder

to preserve the catch. The price of fish which was Rs. 5/- per piece earlier declined to less than a rupee per piece on the first two days. Part of the catch was taken for drying. However, later, ice was made available and the price stabilised. It is reported that the catch was frozen in the fish hold itself to be unloaded and sold later when the catch was meagre consequent to the ban on the operation of mechanised units during June - August. The unexpected high mackerel landing along the Mangalore coast during the close of the fishing season has thus benefitted the trawl operators immensely.



Fig. 2. View of mackerel catch brought by the trawlers at Mangalore Bunder.

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