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### A note on *Acetes* fishery at Murdeswar bay, Karnataka during May, 2006

Gujarat and Maharashtra coast are known for the regular fishery of *Acetes* spp. by trawl and "dol" nets and the species forms important part of the food of all carnivorous fishes of this coast. *Acetes indicus* is the most common species occurring in south-west coast of India and the largest among commercially important sergestids, attaining a maximum size of 40 mm. It occurs in vast shoals in mid-water or near the surface mainly in the inshore waters. Along Karnataka coast, though there is no regular fishery for *Acetes*, it is occasionally caught in good quantities during September-October. It is seen that the fishery indicate the changes in current pattern along the coast and the regularity and success of the fishery depends on the magnitude and pattern of the currents. Murdeswar bay of the Karnataka coast provides a safe place for berthing indigenous crafts. Gillnet is the major gear used in this region as the bottom is rocky and unsuitable for trawling. During first week of May, 2006 a shoal of *Acetes* entered into the bay, resulting in good catch for the local fishermen. The fishery started from 3<sup>rd</sup> May and lasted till 8<sup>th</sup>. Approximately 2 to 3 tons of *Acetes* with a size range of 20 to 30 mm was caught

during these six days. The fishery was carried out with specially designed gear which is exclusively used for *Acetes* fishery. The gear is made of mosquito net with rectangular opening. The dimensions of the mouth of the net is 5x12 feet. The mouth part of the net is firmly knitted with thick cloth to give it a rectangular shape and inner part of the net is firmly knitted with thick cloth to give it a rectangular shape and inner part is kept loose as a belly portion. The net is tied to two poles of five feet length at each end and dragged in the bay by two people (Fig.1). The net is continuously dragged in the shallow waters till the net get clogged. The catch is emptied immediately in the basket and the dragging continues till evening. Since the bay is shallow most of the family members including children



Fig. 1 Operation of specially designed gear for *Acetes* collection

are engaged in the fishery. Since the fishery is irregular and unpredictable, all the fishermen house-holds keep one or more sets of the gear in fully operational condition.

Dried *Acetes* fetches Rs. 100 to 150 per kg in wholesale market. *Acetes* fishery during peak summer months is a boon for the local fishermen, since *Acetes* is having better market value in dried form than fresh and the shrimps gets dried in a day. Dried *Acetes* can

be stored for long time in air tight containers and will be sold for higher rates during monsoon months, when the demand for this product is at its peak. The amount realized during six days was to the tune of rupees 1.5 lakhs.

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