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Note on hand jigging fishery for squids and cuttlefishes at Devipattinam in the Palk Bay and at Keelakarai in the Gulf of Mannar, south-east coast of India

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Hand jigging for squids and cuttlefishes operated from thermocole float both at Devipattinam and Keelakarai has mainly three parts: Japanese made jig (bait like object with 1-2 tiers of hooks), weight attached to it, and 7 to 14 m long line tied to latter. The design and structure of the Japanese made jig have been described earlier (*Mar. Fish. infor. Serv., T&E Ser., 137, 1995*). The details about the fabrication and operation of thermocole float are already available (*Mar. Fish. infor. Serv., T&E Ser., 191, 2007*).

The hand jigging, mostly operated during day time and sometimes during full moon night, is the gear by which the major part of squid and cuttlefishes are caught along the Devipattinam and Keelakarai coast. About 100 motorized canoes using 6-10 thermocole floats go out for fishing with this gear at Devipattinam while about 60 canoes carrying 6-9 thermocoles are operated at Keelakarai.

The cuttlefish catch comprised of mainly two species viz., *Sepia aculeata* and *S. pharaonis*, while squid catch was entirely of *Sepioteuthis lessoniana*. The estimated total cephalopod production in 2006 amounted to 584 t at Devipattinam. The CPUE during the period of observation ranged from 8 to 19.5 kg with an average of 16 kg. Squids accounted for 54% while cuttlefishes formed 46%. Peak catch was obtained during March and June. The size of male *S. aculeata*, *S. pharaonis* and *S. lessoniana* were found to range from 50-140 mm, 60 - 220 mm and 40 - 290 mm (DML) while the sizes of females were 50-150 mm, 60-259 mm and 92-240 mm (DML) respectively. Among the cuttlefishes, *S. pharaonis* was found to be dominant (77.3%).

An estimated 229.9 t cephalopods was landed in 2006 at Kilakarai with an average estimated CPUE of 10.5 kg. Peak catch was landed during June -July. Cuttlefishes constituted 29.2% while squids formed 70.8% of the catch. Among the cephalopods, *S. lessoniana* was found to be the dominant species (70.79%), followed by *S. pharaonis* (17.71%). Among the cuttlefishes, *S. pharaonis* was found to be dominant (60.63%).

Hand jigging fishery of squids and cuttlefishes forms subsistence fishery at both the landing centres. Further observation has to be made in order to know the trend in catch from this gear.