Ninety-seven females were measured and the size ranged between 215 mm to 375 mm and the mean size was 264 mm. A catch of similar magnitude was also observed on 16-9-06.

The catch was segregated at the landing centre depending upon the size. The price at the landing centre was Rs. 592/kg. Lobsters with soft body and damaged body parts were removed. Before weighing, the berried females were squeezed to remove water from the eggs. The catch was iced and packed immediately in plastic crates to prevent any damage.

Reported by: A.D. Sawant, J.R. Dias, K.B. Waghmare and Sujit Sundaram, Mumbai research centre of CMFRI, Mumbai

During the last two decades, clams were exploited in large quantities from estuaries and backwaters to feed shrimps cultured in the commercial ponds along the east coast of India. In recent years, clam meat is served as a dish in hotels in places like Bangalore,
Kanyakumari, Chennai and Kerala.

Heavy exploitation of the clam *Meretrix casta* along the bar-mouth of Gadilam estuary was observed during March and April 2006. About 80 to 100 men and women belonging to Kodikkalkuppam, Suthukulam and Devanampattinam were regularly employed in handpicking of clams for two months. Fishery starts early in the morning and extends upto 11 A.M. Each woman could collect at least two to three baskets of clams in a single day and thus earn Rs.60 to Rs.90/- per day. The men were engaged in transporting the clams to the near shore areas. The clams were transported by fish trucks to the Cuddalore fishing harbour (Fig. 1) and sold to buyers at the rate of Rs. 150/- per tub which will be around 50 kg.

The clams, thus collected were kept in tubs, arranged in rows and (Fig. 2) clean sea water is filled up to the brim and allowed to remain for 3 to 4 hours, for depuration. After draining the sea water from the tubs, clams were washed and loaded in trucks for transportation.

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On the export of Groupers from Tuticorin

Groupers procured from the hook & line landings are prefered for export. Nearly 3-5 sea food export firms situated in and around Tuticorin exported *Epinephelus tauvina* and *E. malabaricus* to China and Honkong since 2000.

As soon as the fish is caught its mouth is tied tightly by nylon rope in order to prevent the damage of air bladder (Fig. 1). Entire fish is covered by polythene sheet over which ice pieces are spread for onboard preservation and brought to the shore for auctioning. After the procurement at the landing centers, the fishes are transported to the packing shed in enclosed van by following the scientific handling procedures. Fishes weighing more than 2 kg are preferred and procured at the rate of Rs. 150/- to Rs. 300/- per kg depending on the size and demand.

![Fig. 1 A view of grooper catch, mouth is tied with nylon rope](image-url)