

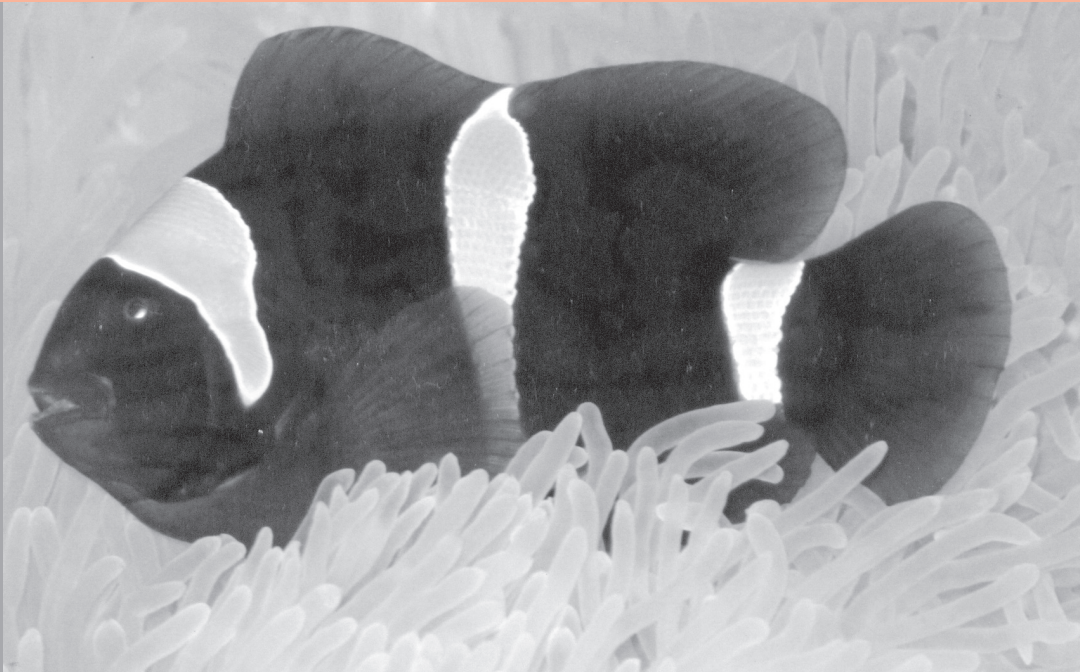
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During the last two decades, clams were exploited in large quantities from estuaries and backwaters to feed shrimps cultured in the commercial ponds along the east coast of



Fig. 1. Clams transported in bags to the fishing harbour

India. In recent years, clam meat is served as a dish in hotels in places like Bangalore,



Fig. 2. Clams in tubs arranged for depuration

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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