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.

Prepared by: R. Thangavelu, P. Poovannan, S. Rajapackiam and S. Mohan, MRC of CMFRI, Chennai

**1205 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
These groupers are weighed individually and packed in thermocool boxes of different sizes. In each box around 40 kg of fishes are packed with ice pieces. Ice pieces are spread at the bottom of the box above which a polythene sheet is spread. Then the groupers are placed and covered by the same polythene sheet. Once again ice pieces are spread on the surface of covered polythene sheet thereby avoiding the direct contact of ice with the fish. Then the top of the box is closed by the lid. Entire thermocool box is tightly sealed by cellophane tape. Subsequently these boxes are transported to Kanyakumari from where these boxes are air lifted to markets in China and Honkong. This kind of export trade take place round the year and the peak season is between November and March.

Prepared by: G. Arumugam and T.S. Balasubramanian, TRC of CMFRI, Tuticorin

1206  Rhiniodon typus landed at Kovalam fish landing centre

A 21.1 ft dead female whale shark was stranded at Kovalam in a multifilament polypropylene net cast on 18th of July 2005 and was drifted ashore in the early morning hours.

Reported by: V. Thanapathi, M. Ravindran, V.A. Leslie, S. Ganesan, D. Pakkiri, A. Janakiraman and M. Anbu, MRC of CMFRI, Chennai

1207  Whale shark Rhiniodon typus landed at Kollam

On 12.9.06 a whale shark got entrapped in a trawl net while fishing off kollam at a depth of 46m. The fish was brought to Sakthikulangara Fisheries Harbour. The male shark measured 445 cm in total length and weighed approximately 2 tonnes. Later it was sold for Rs.1000/-. 

Reported by: Sijo Paul, Kollam field centre of CMFRI, Kollam

1208  Unusual landings of live gastropod Babylonia spirata along the coast of Pulicat

There was an unusual fishery of Babylonia spirata along the Pulicat coast during February - March 2006. The estimated landing was 78.5 t. Fibre glass