

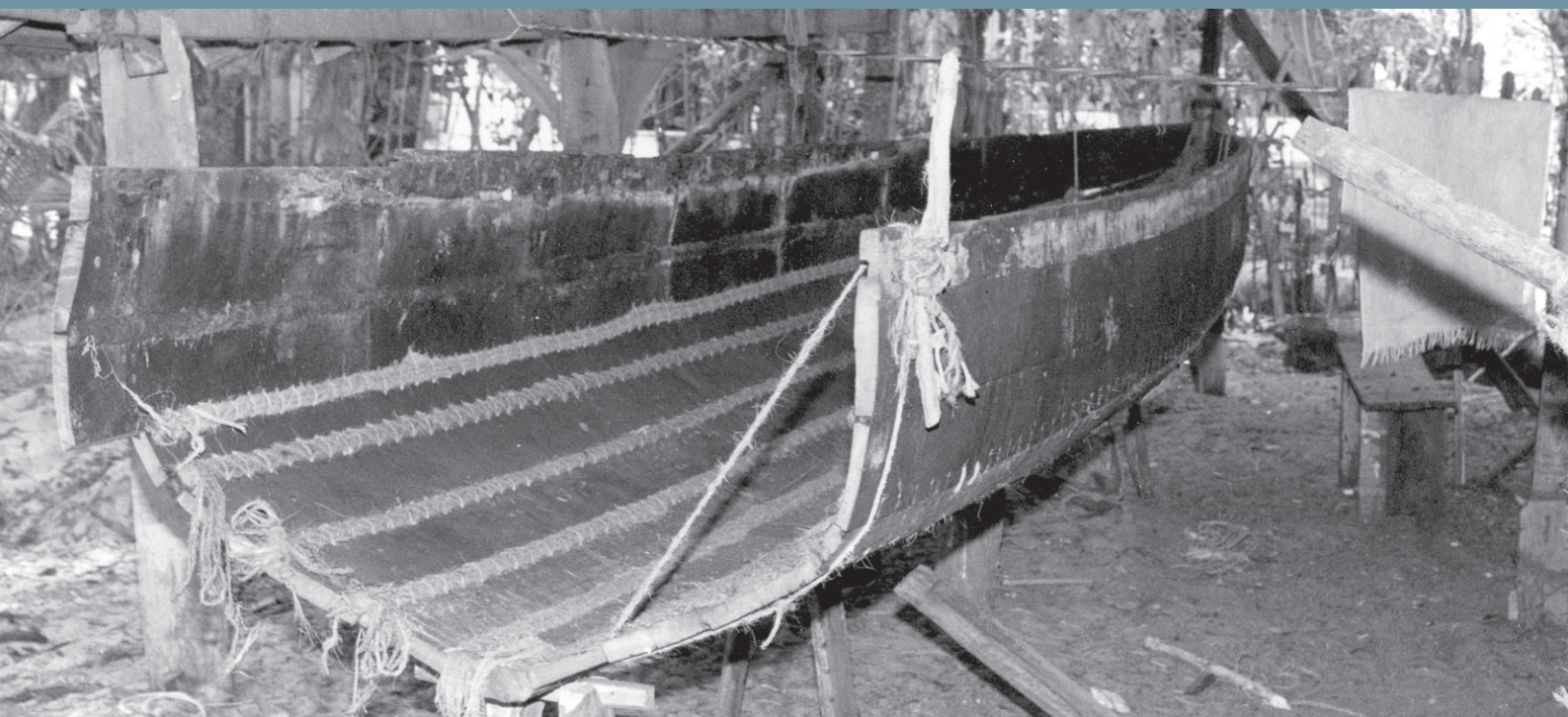
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## Unusual landing of Koth (*Otolithoides biauritus*) and seer fish (*Scomberomorus commerson*) by gill nets at Uttan, Maharashtra

On 20-01-2004 three IBM crafts of OAL 8.0-13.0 meter operating with mid water gill nets, locally known as *Magar jal* and *Ghagra jal*, at depth of 15-45 m in fishing grounds off Versova, Mumbai landed unusually heavy catch of Koth (7.9t) (*Otolithoides biauritus*) at Uttan -I forming 64.0%, of total catch (12.385 t). Other species landed were seerfish *Scomberomorus commerson* (2.9 t), *Arius* spp., *Johnieops* sp., *Carangoides* spp., *Chirocentrus dorab*, *Pellona ditchela*, *P. rotonibea diacanthus*, *Scoliodon* sp., and *Lutjanus* spp. (Table: -1).

### Catch composition:

The catch comprised of about 1400 specimens of Koth weighing 10-18 kg. and 275 numbers of Seer fish in the range of 15-20 kg. The Koth and seerfish were auctioned

at the landing centre for Rs. 55/- and 65/-per kg, which realised Rs. 4,36,150/- and Rs. 1,82,000/- respectively and the rest of the catch was sold at local markets. Koth and seerfish were transported to wholesale markets at Mumbai on the next day for further marketing.

At Uttan-I, one of the major mechanised fish-landing centres of Thane district of Maharashtra, 400 boats operate dol nets and different types of gill nets viz. *Waghra* (bottom set gill net), *Ghagara jal*, *Magar jal* (mid water gill nets) and *Disco jal*, *Dalda* (surface set gill net) from mid August and lasts till May.

Earlier there was a regular fishery in this region for Ghol (*Protonibea diacanthus*) and 'Dara' (*Polynemus indicus*) by using *Waghra jal* of 80-120 mm mesh size. However, this fishery is losing its importance on account of poor

Table 1 : The catch composition: (kg)

Species	Unit-I	Unit-II	Unit-III	Total (kg)	Percentage of total catch
<i>Otolithoides biauritus</i>	680	6500	750	7930	64.0
<i>Scomberomorus commerson</i>	45	185	2845	3075	24.8
<i>Arius</i> spp.	75	170	60	305	2.4
<i>Johnieops</i> sp.	115	55	60	230	1.85
<i>Carangoides</i> spp.	45	10	235	290	2.34
<i>Chirocentrus dorab</i>	45	80	35	160	1.29
<i>Scoliodon</i> spp.	65	40	25	130	1.04
<i>Pellona ditchela</i>	45	35	-	80	0.64
<i>Protonibra diacanthus</i>	80	-	-	80	0.64
<i>Lutjanus</i> sp.	45	35	-	80	0.64
Miscellaneous	10	10	5	25	0.20
Total	1250	7120	4015	12385	100.0

availability of the fish. Therefore, fishermen have introduced a new gear locally known as *Magar jal*, in place of dol nets, gill nets, and bottom set gill nets, which is a mid water gillnet of mesh size 100 to 180 mm generally operated at depth of 30-45 m.

Such unusual catch of Koth and seerfish in *Magar Jal* and *Gagara Jal* generated a lot of enthusiasm among

the fishermen, who were upset by the declining catch of Bombay duck, silver pomfret and seerfish in this region. The scarcity of the fish had forced them to search new grounds for Ghol, ribbon fish, Koth, and Wam etc. to the west and north of Uttan, and formed the basis for the present bumper landing.

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