



MARINE FISHERIES INFORMATION SERVICE



No. 78
DECEMBER 1987

Technical and Extension Series

CENTRAL MARINE FISHERIES RESEARCH INSTITUTE
COCHIN, INDIA

INDIAN COUNCIL OF AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH

OCCURRENCE OF MATURE *MUGIL CEPHALUS* ALONG THE CALICUT COAST*

The mature *Mugil cephalus* has been reported from various parts of the country. It has been found along the Orissa and Tamil Nadu coasts. A few specimens have been reported from Mandapam also. But there is no record of its occurrence along the Calicut coast. Hence the observation on the mature *Mugil cephalus* from the Calicut coast is of interest especially in the context of renewed efforts to develop hatchery techniques for the species.

While studying the biology of *Mugil cephalus* to understand its maturation and breeding season along the Calicut coast, a few matured *Mugil cephalus* were collected during June and July 1986. During this period the fish were caught from surf area at Beypore near Chaliyar River and at Elathur near Korapuzha Estuary. A few specimens were obtained from West Hill beach in cast nets.

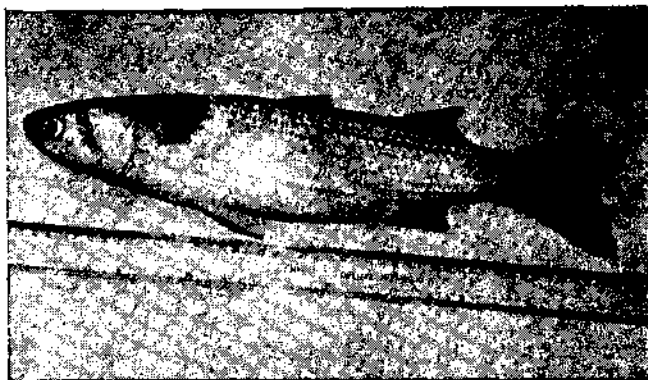


Fig. 1. Mature specimen of *Mugil cephalus* collected from West Hill beach, Calicut. Length 460 mm, wt. 1,120 g.

During the peak monsoon months when the surf water is turbid and cool (around 26°C) the fishermen venture into the surf area during early morning hours (0400-0600 hrs) braving the rain and cold weather. About 20 to 25 fishermen were observed fishing grey mullets near the Chaliyar Estuary at Beypore. The grey mullet locally known as 'Thirutha' is a delicacy especially when they have ripe eggs and each fish weighing about 1 kg may fetch about Rs. 60 to 70.

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The length range of the female fishes was 445 to 460 mm (Fig. 1) weighing 1,000 to 1,200 g. The ovary measured 106 to 165 mm in length and weighed 50 to 207 g. (Fig. 2 & 3). The ova diameter was 0.210 to 0.629 mm and the gonadosomatic index was found to be 4 to 20.

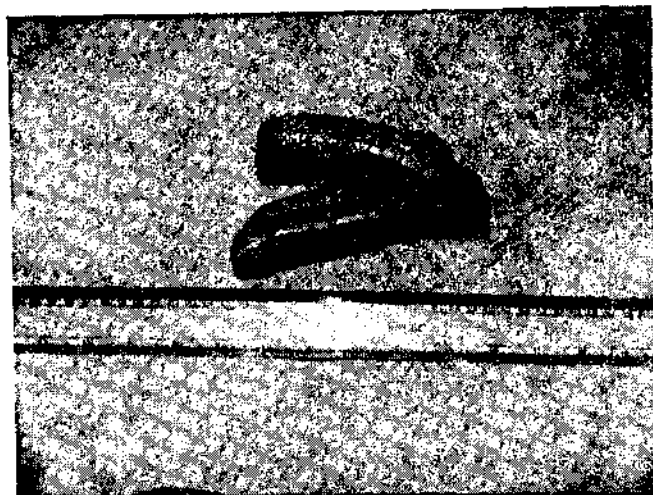


Fig. 2. Matured ovary of length 165 mm, weighing 207 g of *Mugil cephalus* of length 460 mm and wt. 1,120g.

The length of the male specimens ranged from 355-380 mm and weighed 450 to 560 g. The testis measured 40 to 85 mm weighing 6 to 10 g. Motile sperms were observed in the milt collected from the oozing males obtained from the West Hill beach, Calicut from 7-6-1986 to 16-6-1986

The non-availability of matured specimens with required ova diameter is one of the constraint for the development of hatchery for the specimens. The specimen with ova diameter of more than 0.6 mm was cited as one which has attained the required ovarian development for hypophysation. Examination of ova from matured specimens collected from Calicut indicated the availability of such suitable female specimens. It may be considered as one of the favourable conditions for development of hatchery at Calicut coast.

