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BUMPER TRAWL NET CATCHES OF 'KARIKKADI' PRAWNS (*PARAPENAEOPSIS STYLIFERA*) CLOSE TO THE COAST OF KARWAR*

Along the Karnataka coast, Mangaore, Malpe, Tadri and Karwar are the centres from where prawns are fished in fairly good quantities throughout the year. It is estimated that around 4 or 5 thousand tonnes of prawns are landed in this state annually. The popularly known 'karikkadi' prawn, *Parapenaeopsis stylifera* is one of the commercially important species caught in this region. This species is caught exclusively from the inshore waters. In the first fortnight of September, just after the cessation of the south west monsoon by the end of August 1991, a sudden spurt of unusually heavy 'karikkadi' landings was noticed along the Karwar coast: the peak period being 5th to 9th September.

At Karwar, 380 tonnes of prawns were landed between 5th and 21st September, 1991, with a catch rate of 227.0 kg/unit. This heavy landing has come from 1,674 trawler units. Maximum landing was noticed between 5th-9th September when 700 trawler units landed 227 tonnes of prawns worth Rs. 46.5 lakhs. The number of trawler units increased as trawlers from Mangalore, Malpe, Tadri and Goa also ventured in this area very close to the shore in about 6-8 m depth of water near rocky islands. However, due to religious festivals as well as responding to the call of the boat union, the fishing operations were suspended on 11, 12, 17 & 18th of September.

At Tadri, heavy landings of prawns were observed between 12th and 16th September. The

catch/boat varied from 46 to 393 kg/boat. As the industry could not cope up with the unexpected heavy landings by providing storage and transport facilities, the fishing operations were suspended from 17th to 21st. Further, spurt in catches in Kerala and Goa reduced the fishing intensity for prawns in Karwar and Tadri. The catch/unit effort at Karwar decreased from 891 to 65 kg and that of Tadri from 393 to 46 kg. Details regarding the catch/unit effort of both the areas are presented in Fig. 1.

Although prawns were mainly caught by bottom trawl nets, it is worth mentioning here that a few purse seines were able to catch at a rate of 2 tonnes per purse seine during this period.

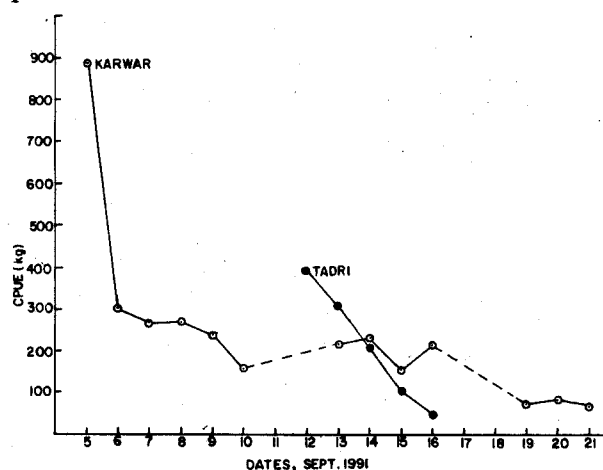


Fig. 1. Catch per unit effort in kg at Karwar and Tadri by trawl nets (Discontinuous lines indicate no fishery).

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Hydrographic parameters observed at Karwar waters (6-8 m depth) during the period are as follows.

Parameters	Surface	Midwater	Bottom
Temperature	27°C	27.5°C	27.5°C
Salinity	15.77‰	23.96‰	25.86‰
Oxygen	3.69 ml/l	2.88 ml/l	2.88 ml/l

The prawns ranged in size from 84 to 121 mm (males 84-101 mm and females 92-121 mm). The sex ratio registered more females (72%) than males (28%). Among the females 32% showed gonads in different stages of maturity (8% in stage II, 13% in stage III and 11% in stage IV). The rest were in spent condition.