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LUCRATIVE FISHERY FOR OIL SARDINE AROUND MANDAPAM*

Unusually heavy catches of oil sardine (*Sardinella longiceps*) by shore seines have been made in the coastal waters at Pamban, Kundukal point and Rameswaram during the first week of January, 1990. On 2nd January, an estimated catch of about 10 tonnes was caught in a single unit of shore seine (*Marukku valai*) operated at Kundukal point. Two to three tonnes of oil sardine were landed by each of the 15 units of shore seine operated in the area between Kundukal point and Pungamapad. Besides, small quantities (10 - 25 Kg) were landed by the trawlers operating at Rameswaram.

The size of the oil sardines landed by shore seines ranged from 12 to 18 cm with the majority falling between 14 and 16 cm. The fishes landed by the trawlers were relatively larger, being in the range of 17 - 20 cm. It was also observed that some of the specimens caught by trawlers were lean.

Although the oil sardine used to be caught generally during the season, the magnitude of the fishery in the current season is found to be very high. It may be worth mentioning here that there has been unusual rains in the first week of January, 1990.

* Reported from the Regional Centre of CMFRI, Mandapam Camp.