PRODUCTION OF ‘MASS’ FROM *EUTHYNNUS* SPP. AT BLANGAD, TRICHUR DISTRICT, KERALA *

Production of ‘Mass’ (smoked tuna flesh) from *Euthynnus* spp. was observed recently at Blangad, a fish landing centre in Trichur District, Kerala.

Fishes generally called ‘Kudutha’ or ‘Sootha’ (*Euthynnus* spp.) are used for the preparation of ‘Mass’. First, the Viscera and head parts are removed and then washed in fresh water and boiled in salt water for nearly 18 hours. Afterwards, the fishes are removed from the container and each fish is split into 2 pieces lengthwise. From the soft flesh the spines are removed and the stuff is arranged on specially made metallic rods in single layers and, under these rods, fire is set using firewood so that the flesh is dried up and smoked. This process continues for 30 minutes and immediately it is subjected to sundrying using a specially erected wooden platform on which a single layer of coir mat is spread. Sundrying process is done continuously for 8 days, due to which the flesh becomes very hard, moisture free and brownish black in colour. Now the ‘Mass’ is prepared and is ready for sale.

While undergoing the process, the fresh fish loses its weight at an average rate of 70%. At present 400 kg of fish are processed at a time from Blangad. It mainly depends on the availability and price of the fishes. ‘Mass’ thus prepared are sent to Kozhikode district of Kerala (Beypore).

The person engaged in this new venture had his training in the Lakshadweep and he started this processing very recently on an experimental basis.

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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.

** BUMPER CATCH OF MACKEREL AT PANJIM, GOA **

Unlike the previous few seasons, the mackerel fishery at Panjim during this season was exceptionally good. Infact the purse - seiners started landing mackerel from the second fortnight of July. However, the magnitude of the catch during July and August and also in the earlier part of September was not that much high but the bumper catches of mackerel ranging from 14 to 19 cm size were landed at Panjim jetty on 18th and 19th Sept. On an average each purse-seine landed a catch of about 3 tonnes of mackerel practically flooding the jetty. Seeing the good catches of mackerel in the north west of Panjim, the purse - seiners from other