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ON A SHOAL OF JAVANESE COW-NOSE RAY FROM PALK BAY *

The occurrence of shoals of Javanese cow-nose ray (*Rhinoptera javanica*) has been reported on a few occasions from the south east coast of India. One such shoal was sighted in the Palk Bay on 16 - 12 - '89 by the shrimp trawlers operated at a depth of 10 m and netted the fish at an average rate of 350 kg per boat. The rays had a disc width ranging from 100 - 165 cm and a weight from 16 - 57 kg. Eighty per cent of the fish were females.

The gut content analysis revealed the presence of crushed pieces of gastropod shells, partly digested fishes such as sciaenids and gobids, and crustaceans like crabs, *Squilla*, *Penaeus semisulcatus* and *Alpheus* spp.

The rays landed were processed by pit curing method. The cured products were sent to the markets in Kerala where there is good demand.

* Reported by : Hameed Batcha, Madras Research Centre of CMFRI, Madras.