

Bumper Landings of Cuttlefish at Colachel

An estimated total quantity of 27 tonnes of cuttlefish (*Sepia* spp.) was landed by trawl nets at Colachel in Kanyakumari District, Tamil Nadu on 8 September. Landing of cuttlefish of this magnitude is unusual to this area according to the reports of Shri I. P. Ebenezer, Technical Assistant from Kanyakumari.

The trawl nets, 52 in all, each operated from 9m-long mechanised vessels of 60-80 HP with a crew of 5, 25 km south-west off Colachel at 50-55 m depth landed an estimated total catch of 45.8 tonnes. Among them *Sepia* spp. (*S. Pharaonis* and *S. aculeata*) constituted 59.9%, *Nemipterus* sp 24.8%, prawns 3.6%, *Thenus* sp. 0.5%, rays 2.3% and fishes belonging to various other groups 9.9%.

The average catch per unit

for all items combined was 881.5 kg and for *Sepia* alone it was 519 kg.

Apart from the above cuttlefish catch another estimated total catch of 2156 kg exclusively of *Sepia pharaonis* was also landed that day by fishermen operating anchor hooks (jigging) from catamaran 7 km off Colachel at 40-45 m depth. Eighty five units were operated and the catch per unit worked out to 24.4 kg.

The Cuttlefish which has been selling in this region around Rs. 15/- per kg came down to Rs. 7/- that day. Since the export agents could not take the entire landings, about 25% of it were removed for sale in local markets and for sun drying.

Heavy landings of squids (*Loligo* spp.) by boat seine were also reported from neighbouring landing centres.



The cuttlefish being sorted into groups