RESEARCH ON CHANKS

Breeding and development of laboratory reared Xancus pyrum

One sacred chank, Xancus pyrum reared in the laboratory of Mandapam Regional Centre of CMFRI, bred and released the egg capsule on 7 Oct. The MSD of the Chank, bearing No: MR/631, was 60.3 mm. The egg capsule contained 18 chanks. The capsule was maintained in the running water conditions. Baby chanks hatched out after 33 days of incubation at an ambient water temperature ranging from 27.0° to 30.5°C. Three baby chanks were alive after 20 days of hatching. This is the first report of breeding and larval development of sacred chank in the culture conditions.

Tagging of chanks

In collaboration with the Tamil Nadu Fisheries Department, 212 chanks were tagged in Tuticorin Research Centre of CMFRI and released during Oct-Dec '91, to study the growth and movements of chanks. From the earlier releases, 4 chanks were recovered after 18 months and found that the length increase was 2 mm whereas the weight increase was 10 gm. The Indian sacred chank, Xancus pyrum appears to be a slow growing species.

During the last quarter of 1991, 7 tagged chanks were recaptured around Mandapam. Of these, 2 chanks, bearing tags MR/123 and MR/147, were recaptured after a record of 470 and 507 days respectively after their release in the sea.

Bumper catch of mackerel

Heavy landings of mackerel Rastrelliger kanagurta in Pamban region during Oct-Dec '91 were reported. Gill nets having mesh size 50-70 mm, (popularly known as No. 2 gillnets) and 80-90 mm (popularly known as No. 4 gillnets) jointly contributed the landings of 705.1 t of mackerel. The catch showed an increase of 643.9 tonnes over the corresponding period of last year. The No.2 gillnets contributed to 86.8% of the total mackerel catch and the No. 4 gillnets contributed the rest of the landings. The catch per effort of mackerel for No. 2 and No. 4 gillnets were 104 kg and 51.4 kg respectively. The size ranged from 172-264 mm with mode at 220 mm. Females dominated the catch and were in spent condition.

Landings of oil sardine doubled

Unusual high landings of oil sardine in the past few years has, now, turned to be a regular feature, in the Palk Bay and Gulf of Mannar. The monthly catch varied from 7.4 t in October to 100 t in December at Rameswaram and in Pamban it was 22 t showing a decrease of 10 t when compared to the landings of last year period. The size range recorded at Rameswaram was 104-193 mm with modes at 120, 170 and 180 mm and at Pamban, the range was 116-194 mm with modes at 130 and 170 mm.

At both the centres, the oil sardine catch came from the Palk Bay side. With the Northeast monsoon, oil sardines are not migrating to the Gulf of Mannar side as happened last year resulting in a very lucrative fishery at Mandapam and further west.

Unusual Sailfish Caught

A large sized sailfish, Istiophorus platypterus measuring 348 cm in total length and weighing 69 kg, was caught in a trawlnet, off Visakhapatnam, at 50 m depth in the morning hours of 27 November. Though small and medium sized sailfishes were landed as incidental catches in hooks and lines operated by catamarans, this large sized sailfish was caught by a small trawler. The specimen landed was then auctioned for Rs. 825. This was reported by Shri. S. V. Seshagiri Rao, Technical Officer (T-5).