**Heavy landings of the Giant sized lesser devil ray *Mobula diabolus* by gillnets at Chennai**

36.2 t, 160.6 t and 149.4 t of unusually giant sized lesser devil ray *M. diabolus* was landed at Chennai Fisheries harbour by gill net operated at a depth of 80-100 m off Nagapattinam in January, February and March 09 respectively. On 10.2.09 and 20.2.09 the landing was high as 22 t and 18 t respectively. The disc width range was 230 cm to 320 cm and the weight range was 250-450 kg. In addition to this, the devilray *Manta birostris* of about 700 kg - 1200 kg weight was also observed in the landing. The gillnet operation was at a depth of 80-100 m off Nagapattinam area.

**Heavy landing of Smooth Golden Pufferfish *Lagocephalus inermis* (Temminck & Schlegel, 1847) at Chennai**

During July to December 2008 heavy landing of the Smooth Golden Pufferfish (*Lagocephalus inermis*) was noticed at Chennai Fisheries Harbour. Nearly 3-5 tonnes of *L.inermis* was caught by a single trawler on July 2008. Normally the pufferfish landed are dried and sold as an ingredient for poultry/prawn feed. But this time the entire catch of pufferfish was salted and dried after deskinning and cleaning, for export purpose. The local agents paid Rs.10-20/- per kg for fresh pufferfish; after processing, it was worth about Rs.100/- per kg. With increasing demand in local markets, the price of *L. inermis* now ranges (based on size) from Rs.10/- to 50/- per kg.

**An unusual catch of shrimps by indigenous gears in Nochikuppam, Chennai**

Bumper catch of shrimps to a tune of 22.8 t was recorded during 10th to 14th December 2008 by trammel nets operated off Nochikuppam, Chennai. The number of units operated varied between 100 and 180 and the CPUE ranged from 3.6 to 61.3 kg. The catch exclusively consisted of penaeid shrimps, of which, *P. indicus* formed 95% followed by *P. monodon* (3%) and *P. semisulcatus* (2%). The size ranged from 115-180 mm with the dominant modes at 141-145 and 161-165 mm for...
females and 131-175 mm with modes at 150-155 mm for males. Females dominated (60%). Most of the females were found with late maturing and matured gonads. The catch was composed mainly of fairly large sized shrimps and the head on count varied from 30 to 40 per kg for females and 35-45 for males. The total value realized was Rs. 68.4 lakhs. The present observation on the bumper catch of Indian white shrimp (P. indicus) off Chennai during the post north-east monsoon period may be a part of moving shoals from north to south utilizing the prevailing southern water currents.

**Unusual fishery of Chank along Puducherry coast**

A modified trawl net exclusively made for gastropod chank fishery was deployed along the Puducherry coast during October 2008 to February 2009. For chank fishery, a new bed has been located off Pudupattinam at a depth of 10 to 25 m where the sea bottom is loose muddy with chanks buried underneath. The length of trawl net deployed for the fishery was 300 m wherein the foot rope was attached with the additional sinkers weighing around 300 kg to sink the net to the muddy bottom and scoop the gastropods present in the bottom of the sea. The gastropods *Xancus pyrum* and *Hemifusus* sp. were caught along with some bottom fish. Each haul landed around 15 to 25 chanks of 144 mm average length (av.wt.195 g). Each chank fetched Rs.400 - 500/- in the landing centre.

**Sput in the landings of crabs along northern Tamil Nadu and Puducherry coasts**

For the first time, heavy landings of *P. sanguinolentus* and other portunid crabs along the Tamil Nadu and Puducherry coasts were recorded during the last week of October 2008. The total landings of crabs varied from 0.04 to 48.75 t at Chennai (Kasimedu) with CPUE 0.14 – 125.0 kg/hr. In Puducherry, the catch ranged from 0.6 to 29.4 t with CPUE 1.4 – 76.7 kg/hr. At Cuddalore, it varied from 1.9 to 17 t with CPUE 6.1 – 35.4 kg/hr. At Chennai, the estimated crab landing during the period from 29th to 31st October, 2008 was 95.75 t, recording 3-fold increase when compared to 31 t of crabs landed during October, 2007. The usual constituent portunid crab species, namely, *Portunus pelagicus* was completely absent in the trawl catches landed at all the three centres.

Totally 10 species (9 portunid and 1 xanthid) were represented at Chennai, of which, *P. sanguinolentus* dominated (42.5 %), followed by *C. lucifera* (10.4 %), *C. variegata*, *C. natator*, *G. bispinosa*, *C. feriata*, *P. gladiator*, *Xancus pyrum*, *C. lucifera*, *C. feriata*, and *Hemifusus* sp. were caught along with some bottom fish. Each haul landed around 15 to 25 chanks of 144 mm average length (av.wt.195 g). Each chank fetched Rs.400 - 500/- in the landing centre.

**Xancus pyrum**