



Fishing Trends of Two Mud Shrimps Off Mumbai by trawl

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Penaeid prawns belonging to genus *Solenocera* are generally called 'Mud Shrimps' in view of their environmental preference. In Indian waters Maharashtra ranks first in the contribution of *solenocerids* to the fishery. Earlier Kunju (1967) reported a fishery for *Solenocera indicus* Nataraj which was later identified as *S. crassicornis* Milne Edwards. This is a coastal species fished by traditional 'Dol' and 'Bhokshi' nets along Maharashtra coast. *Solenocerids* in general are deep water forms. Occurrence of this species along the coastal waters must have been recent in the evolutionary scale of time as they cannot tolerate steep changes in the physico-chemical conditions which take place when monsoons result in altering salinity and temperature parameters of coastal waters. *Solenocera crassicornis* population migrates in swarms to deeper waters when monsoonic weather conditions strengthen (Kunju M.M).

That another species of *Solenocera* identified as *S. choprai* Nataraj would be a contributor to the coastal fishery of Maharashtra was not expected. But Mechanisation of country craft and usage of trawl nets made such a condition possible. The result is another fishery for *S. choprai*

Table 1 showing catch particulars for *S. crassicornis* & *S. choprai*

Period	Total Prawn catch (S.dock, trawl)	Component of	
		<i>S. choprai</i> t / %	<i>S. crassicornis</i> t/%
1991-92	14379 t	967(6.7)	367(4.8)
1992-93	19101	62(0.3)	2748(14.4)
1993-94	17699	3502(1.9)	668(3.7)
1994-95	11502	95.3(0.82)	480(4.7)
1995-96	9466	7.5(0.07)	1002(10.5)

fished exclusively by trawl net (Aravindakshan and Karbhari, 1983) came into existence. It is interesting therefore to have a comparative account of these two species and this is attempted covering a period of five years which may be of considerable help in the management of the fishery.

It will be seen from the Table that landings of *S. choprai* are somewhat less than *S. crassicornis* in magnitude as well as percentage of total prawn landings. This is due to the fact that only a part of *S. choprai* could be fished and larger size groups are net fished at present. The distributional record of *S. choprai* (Melthuis, 1980) shown

greater depths than fishable depth upto 70m by traditional trawlers. But larger trawlers belonging to Fishery Survey of India and others can explore the adjoining fished areas and determine the extent of fishable stock still waiting to be tapped. Incidentally the meat of *solenocerids* is favoured by Japanese fish eating public and this enhances the scope for earning additional foreign exchange.

References

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