

OBSERVATIONS ON THE FOOD AND FEEDING OF THE INDIAN MACKEREL, *RASTRELLIGER* *CANAGURTA* (CUVIER)*

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Received July 22, 1952

THE present communication relates to observations made on the food and feeding of the Indian mackerel, *Rastrelliger canagurta* (Cuvier), which occupies a high rank amongst the food fishes of India and enjoys a wide distribution in the Indo-Pacific area. Except for a few brief notes on the nature of the food by Devanesan and John (1940), John and Menon (1942), Chidambaram (1944) and Chacko (1949) there is no detailed account especially of the seasonal fluctuations in the food elements and the feeding intensity. In a recent paper Chidambaram and others (1952) have given an account of the fat variations and certain biological aspects of the mackerel. The problem of the food and feeding of the European mackerel, *Scomber scombrus* has been studied by Allen (1897 and 1909), Bullen (1908), Ehrenbaum (1914), Steven (1949) and Sette (1950). The present study is only a preliminary investigation and it is hoped that this may form the basis for a more comprehensive work on the subject.

Our thanks are due to Dr. N. K. Panikkar for going through the manuscript and offering helpful suggestions.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

This study is based on biweekly examination of mackerel landed during January 1949 to January 1950. The species were obtained partly from the departmental collections and partly from the commercial catches made in the 6-10 fathom area near Calicut. During 1950 mackerels were examined once in a fortnight and this was helpful in verifying the results obtained during 1949. A total of 395 specimens were examined of which 321 were adults and 74 juveniles. During the period of this investigation mackerels were available near about Calicut practically throughout the year, though the peak season of its fishery was from September to December. The data obtained as a result of the study of triweekly plankton collections made at

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