

Heavy landings of *Sardinella longiceps* by purseseiners at Malpe Fisheries Harbour, Karnataka

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Malabar coast is well known for oilsardine and mackerel fishery. The oilsardine fishery along the coast is characterised by annual fluctuations in landings (Fig.1). Mangalore and Malpe fisheries

harbours are the major oilsardine landing centres of Karnataka. Malpe Fisheries Harbour contributes 40-65% to the total oilsardine landings in Karnataka. *S. longiceps* is exploited mainly from 10-25 m depth

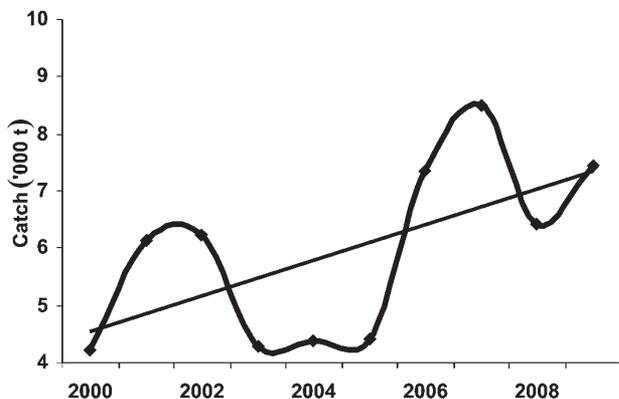


Fig. 1. Annual catch and catch trend of oilsardine at Malpe

by mechanised and motorised fishing boats. Purse seine is the major gear contributing 90-98% to the total oilsardine landings of the state. Besides purse seine, minor landings are observed in trawl, ringseine hand trawl *etc.* (Fig. 2).

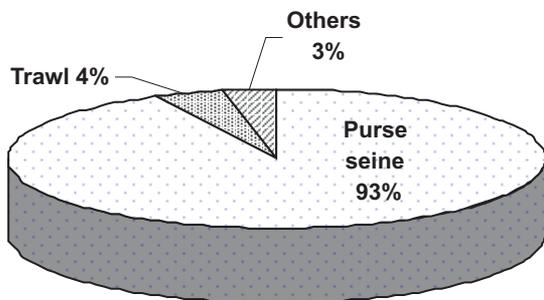


Fig. 2. Average gear-wise distribution of oilsardine landed at Malpe Fisheries Harbour during 2005-2009

Oilsardine fishery is generally observed throughout the year with peak landings from

September to December extending even up to February in some season (Fig. 3). During December 2009, bumper catch of oilsardine in purseseine was observed on 9th and 29th at Malpe Fisheries Harbour. The catch rates of oilsardine in purseseine during the days varied from 5 to 15 t per unit (average of 7 t per unit), recording 2 to 6 fold increase in catch rates. The auction rate of the fish ranged from Rs. 4 to Rs. 8 per kg, yielding total revenue of 33 lakhs in two days. Since oilsardine was landed in bulk, the fish was used for fish meal production and transported to fish meal plants located at Udyavar, Thottam, Manoor kota and Pithrodi.

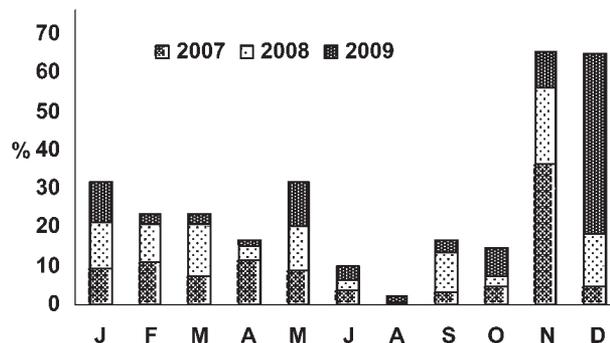


Fig. 3. Seasonal variations of oilsardine landings (%) at Malpe Fisheries Harbour

Through the occurrence of oilsardine shoals during post-monsoon months is a common phenomenon along the coast, 47% of the annual oilsardine landing was observed in December, 2009. More than 40% of the landing during this month comprised of 0 year class, suggesting inshore migration of recruits.