

Heavy landing of tomato hind *Cephalopholis sonnerati* (Valenciennes, 1828) at Chennai

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Heavy landing of the tomato hind, *Cephalopholis sonnerati* (Valenciennes, 1828), locally called 'thakkali kalava' or 'sivappu kalava' (Fig.1), was recorded at Chennai Kasimedu Fisheries Harbour in July 2008 and August 2009. About 7.8 t were landed in July 2008 by mechanised trawlers (multiday thangal trawlers) operated south-east of Chennai,

at 70-80 fathom depth, at a distance of 50-60 km. On 10-07-2008, 1.6 t of *C. sonnerati* was landed along with *Epinephelus tauvina* (1.0 t), and *Epinephelus malabaricus* (0.6 t). A total of 3.2 t of *C. sonnerati* was landed in August 2009, forming 5.5% of the serranid landings during that year.

The size range of *C. sonnerati* was 275-520 mm (TL), with the dominant mode at 400-449 mm. The weight ranged from 0.3 to 2 kg.

The catches were sold at ₹ 80 per kg. Before packing in ice, the head portion including gills was bound with a rubber band to prevent water (from the ice) entering into the gill opening. This ensured retaining the red colour of the gills. The fishes were transported to Kerala for export.



Fig. 1. *C. sonnerati* landed at Kasimedu Fisheries Harbour, Chennai