

Unique fishery of the whelk, *Babylonia zeylanica* at Sakthikulangara

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The trawlers of Sakthikulangara engage a different fishery towards the lean period during March, targeting the whelk, *Babylonia zeylanica* along the south-west coast off Sakthikulangara. In March 2012, the trawl fishery of *Babylonia* spp.

was unique in that almost 99% of the catch comprised *B. zeylanica* with a very a small quantity of *B. spirata* (Fig. 1). The trawl nets used for this fishery had more weights than the usual ones. During the hauling process, the sea bottom is being ploughed so that



Fig. 1. *Babylonia zeylanica* (bigger one) and *B. spirata* (smaller one)

along with the catch, mud is also being hauled which can be highly detrimental to the bottom fauna. Trawlers of 10-17 m size are involved in fishing with 5-7 crew members. The fishing starts between 1400 and 1800 hrs on reaching the fishing ground,



Fig. 2. *Conus* spp. ready for auction

off Sakthikulangara at a depth of 30-50 m. Hauling lasts for about 1 h and 30 min is spent for washing the mud along with the catch at the sea surface. The crew members are paid ₹ 500 per trip for their extra

strenuous and continuous night fishing. A single trip may make 8-10 hauls. At times, along with *B. zeylanica*, *Conus* spp. (Fig. 2) is also caught. The landing is generally during the early hours from 0500 to 0700 hrs (Fig. 3) and the catch is auctioned at the landing centre (Fig. 4; 5). *B. zeylanica* is sold at an average price of ₹ 95 /kg and *Conus* spp. at ₹ 5/kg (Table 1).



Fig. 3. Unloading *Babylonia zeylanica* from the trawl boats at Sakthikulangara



Fig. 4. *B. zeylanica* ready for auction



Fig. 5. Auctioned *B. zeylanica* ready for transportation

Table 1. Details of the catch and revenue earned from whelk fishery at Sakthikulangara

Date	No. of boats	Average catch/boat (kg)	Average rate (₹)	Total revenue (₹)
19/04/12	40	800	95	30,40,000/-
26/04/12	75	500	95	35,62,500/-
11/05/12	44	587	95	24,53,660/-