Incidental landing of lesser devil ray *Mobula diabolus* (Shaw, 1804) at Dummulapeta and Bhairavapalem, Andhra Pradesh

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Landings of lesser devil ray, *Mobula diabolus* (Shaw, 1804) were reported at Dummulapeta and Bhairavapalem landing centers of Andhra Pradesh from 21.03.2012 to 23.03.2012. A total of 23 mobulid rays were caught incidentally in drift gill nets set in surface waters for targeting yellow fin tuna shoals by motorized gillnetters, 20 km away from the shore. The disc length of *Mobula diabolus* ranged from 62-105 cm, disc width from 97-163 cm and weighed between 40 and 110 kg. Targeted fishery for yellow fin tuna commences in September and lasts till March. During this period fishermen actively operate HDPE drift gillnets with mesh size 80-150 mm along the Kakinada coast. This incidental catch of lesser devil rays coincided with nets set during night time.

Mobula diabolus cutting

Mobula diabolus landed at Dummulapeta and Bhairavapalem landing centres

Mobula diabolus are locally called as "Deyyam teku" and occurs in both coastal and oceanic waters from the intertidal to the epipelagic zone around coral and rocky reefs, in lagoons and enclosed open bays. The catch was disposed by open auction at the Dummulapeta and Bhairavapalem landing

Mobula diabolus flesh and skin was great demand, flesh is cut into strips for salting process

Mobula diabolus removing of gill rakers and liver for oil extraction

centres. *Mobula diabolus* catch was auctioned at the rate of ₹ 35- 45/ kg. The ray was cut open to remove gill rakers and liver. Cut gill rakers were cleaned, dried and exported to Japan, Singapore, and China, as it has prime importance in traditional Chinese medicine. The liver is used for oil extraction. As there was no demand for flesh, the flesh was cut into strips for salting. The salted and dried flesh was sent to Tamil Nadu and Kerala markets. Mobulids are under IUCN Red list, as these stocks are depleting at rapid pace due to its slow growth, late maturity and low fecundity. These incidental catches because of large scale operation of drift gill nets are contributing to the increased fishing pressure on devil rays.