Occurrence of *Porphyra* sp. from Dhalawapuram, Ashtamudi Lake

Kaladharan, P., Khambadkar, L. R., Alloycious, P. S. and Saji, K. K.
Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute, Kochi

Porphyra, the most important red algal genus is widely cultivated for edible purposes. It is commonly known as purple laver and its value added product marketed as *nori* is very popular in Japan. *Porphyra* grows normally in temperate waters which is the most widely consumed marine alga in the world. There are more than 150 species of *Porphyra* reported to occur worldwide and four species are known from Indian waters.

Huge mass of large, foliose and purple- red thallii of red seaweed *Porphyra* sp were found floating in Dhalawapuram estuary of Vembanad lake system near Neendakara during the second week of February 2014 which lasted till the end of the month. The floating thalii of *Porphyra* sp (Fig. 1) were deep purple coloured, flat, thin but mucilaginous and foliose. Some of the floating bits of *Porphyra* sp. could be seen with discoid holdfast connected through short stipe. The thallus length ranged from 20-32 cm and the breadth ranged from 9- 14 cm and the margin was entire. Along with *Porphyra* sp. *Ulva reticulata*, (Fig. 2) *U. fasciata* and hydromedusae were found floating. The water salinity was 30 ppt.

Fig. 1 Thallus of *Porphyra* sp. floating in the estuary

Fig. 2. Entire thallus of *Porphyra* sp collected from Dhalawapuram

Besides the floating mass, no plants of *Porphyra* sp. growing attached to rocks or shells could be observed from the Dhalawapuram estuary. To collect any fresh and living specimens of this red alga, attempts were made from the intertidal rocky coast of Thirumallavaram during the low tide on 1st March 2014 and we could see neither any living nor floating purple coloured algae. However, some bits of partly dried thallus of *Porphyra* sp with short stipe and discoid holdfast were found cast ashore along with

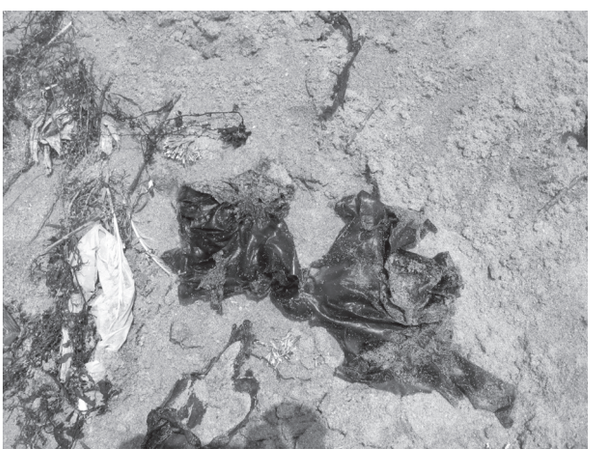

Fig. 3. Partly dried seaweeds from the Valavilthopu beach

Sargassum wightii, *Ulva reticulata* and *Stoechospermum marginatum* from Valavilthoppu beach (Fig. 3) which is situated 1.5 km north of Thirumallavaram and just before the Neendakara barmouth.

As we could collect only the floating mass of *Porphyra* sp. though in huge quantities and even from the eastern region of the estuary (St Sebastian Island) which is far away from the barmouth, it is believed that these plants of *Porphyra* sp. grow in the rocky intertidal waters of Thangaserry - Thirumallavaram and after getting detached drifted along with the northerly current and might have entered the Dhalawapuram estuary during the high tide hours.