

## Seasonal fishery of blue swimmer crab at Attupuram landing centre



Gill net fishers at Attupuram-Company Kadavu landing centre

Recent visits to the landing centers of Attupuram – Kathiyalam area in Thrissur district of Kerala, it is learnt that a seasonal fishery for Blue swimmer crab – *Portunus pelagicus*- is existing in this area for a few years. Every year during July-August period, gillnet fishing for blue swimmer crab (BSC) is active here. Of the harvested catch 99% is BSC and the rest the Three spotted crab, *P. sanguinolentus*. Crabs are also caught by hand-picking during the season when young boys are engaged in this activity. The BSC caught in the gillnets were bigger in size and males were dominating. Their size range and other details were recorded (Table 1).

For fishing no craft is used and fishermen walk into the sea and spread the gill nets about 100-200 meters from the shore. The width of the one piece of net is 3 meters and the length is 90-100 m, and usually 4 such pieces are joined together. The mesh size of the net is between 160-200 mm.

Every day fishermen keep the nets in the water for about 18-20 hours, between 10 am to 4 am the next day. For collecting the entangled crabs,

the nets are brought to the shore and carefully remove the live crabs without damaging the nets. The fishers reported that BSC are found to be calm once it is



Harvested live Blue Swimmer Crabs ready for sale

Table 1. Size range and other details of the crab caught in gill nets

Sex	CW (mm)	CL (mm)	TW (g)	Maturity condition
Male	130-175	58-81	126-346	Mature
Female	142-154	63-74	170-267	Mature not berried

CW- Carapace width; CL- Carapace length; TW- Total weight

entangled and do not cut the nets but and cause damage to the nets. During  
Three spot crabs are more aggressive the season, approximately 150 kg /day

of crabs are harvested from Attupuram-Company Kadavu and 500 kg/day from Kathiyalam (Thattumkadavu), and the wholesale price of crab ranged between ₹ 230 – 250 / kg.

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