

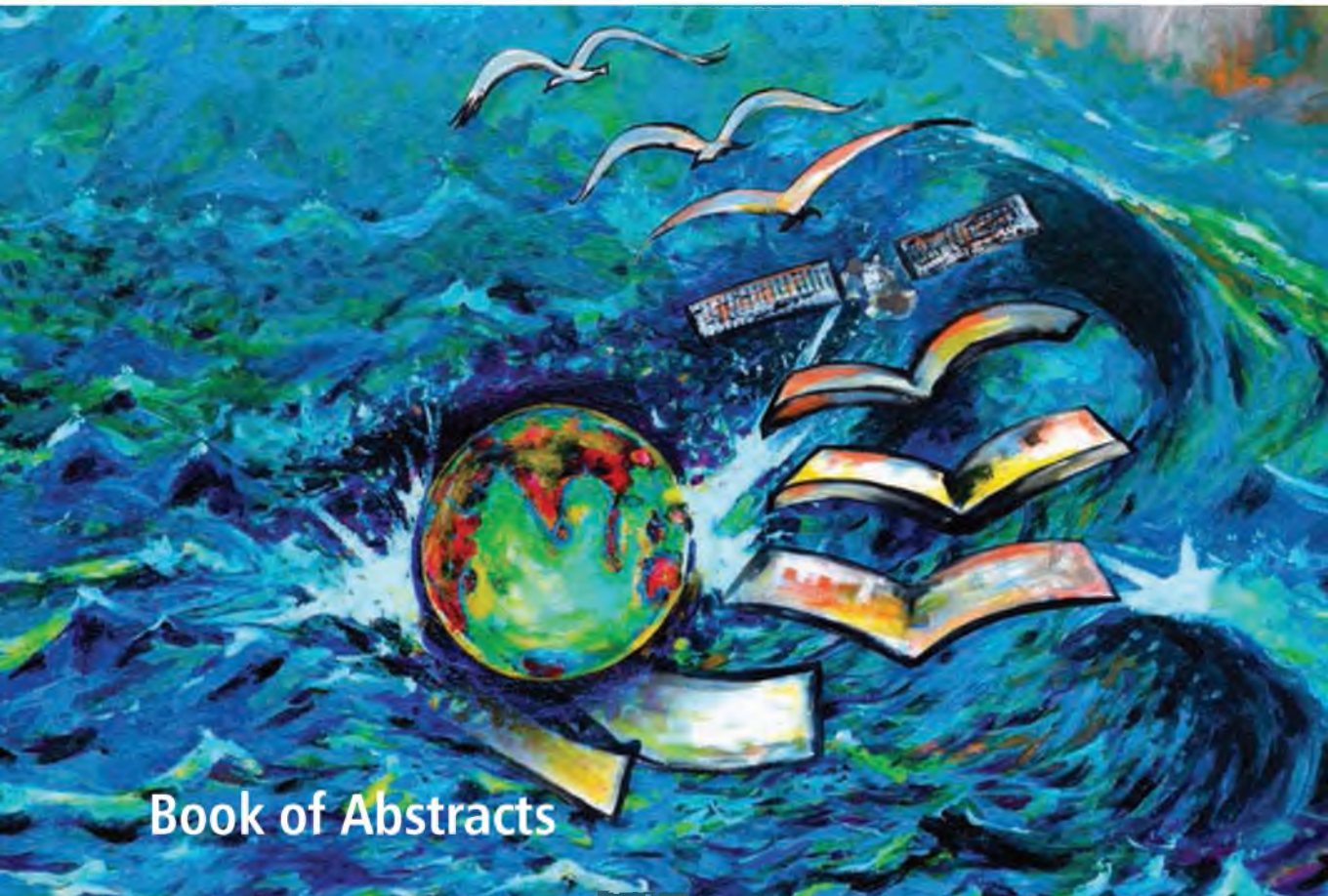


# MECOS2

## Marine Ecosystems

### Challenges & Opportunities

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Book of Abstracts



## Value chain in mullet farming in Kerala: Scientific gaps and potential

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Brackish water finfish farming is getting momentum in Kerala due to ever increasing demand for fish as a nutritional food. Low return from shrimp aquaculture is also a reason for development of finfish farming. Mullet and Pearl spot are the premium choice for the brackish water finfish farmers of Kerala owing to high price and market demand. There is very high demand for seeds of both these fishes particularly during October - November as license for aquaculture commence from 15th of November. Wild collected seeds are the only source for Mullet (*Mugil cephalus*) as there are no commercial hatcheries functioning. Thirty to forty groups of traditional fisher folks were identified near Vypin area in Ernakulam who carries out collection of Mullet fry's from specific locations in sea during the onset of monsoon (Fig 1).

The fry's of 1 to 2 cm size and 200-300mg weight are collected using 6mm mesh cast net. These groups have indigenous know-how and specific skills in

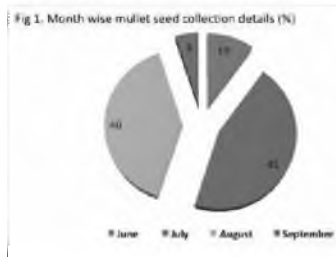


Fig 2. Collection and sorting of the of the Mullet fry's from the sea shore by the fisher folk

identification of the Mullet in fry stage. During the process they release other fishes larvae back to sea as a tradition (Fig 2). Average annual seed collection per group ranges from 20,000 to 40,000 and a total of 12 to 13 lakhs seeds were marketed by these groups during last season. The price varies from Rs. 4.00 to Rs. 7.00 per fry. Seed stocking is the main challenge faced by them due to the lack of enough space and this causes mortality. Middlemen who possess stocking space get profit due to this situation. Creation of centralized facilities for making seed banks of Mullet fry's near by the seed collection area are required to enhance the survival percentage, health status and return from the collected seeds. This also would facilitate getting quality larvae for the farmers.

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