Brief Communication

Cage culture of Maze rabbitfish

Tanveer Hussain[1]*, P.P. Suresh Babu[2], C. Kalidas[1], Boby Ignatius[2], Kurva Raghu Ramdu[1], V. Mahesh[1], Praveen Dube[1], Sushant Sanaye[3], Jagruti Gavande[3] and Neeraj Korgaonkar[3]

[1] Karwar Regional Station of ICAR-Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute, Karwar, Uttara Kannada-581 301, Karnataka
[2] ICAR-Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute, Kochi-682 018, Kerala
[3]Mangrove and Marine Biodiversity Conservation Foundation of Maharashtra, India

*E-mail: tanveer.hussain@icar.gov.in

Maze rabbitfish, *Siganus vermiculatus* is considered as promising species for coastal cage and pond farming due to its herbivorous feeding habit and ability to feed low on the aquatic food chain. The Karwar Regional Station was successful in breeding and seed production of maze rabbitfish, *S. vermiculatus* in captive condition. To popularize the cage farming of maze rabbitfish, thousand numbers of hatchery produced *S. vermiculatus* fingerlings (Total length 3.63±0.088 cm and body weight 2.46±0.03 g), were supplied to the Mangrove Foundation, Maharashtra, on 22nd December 2023. This was used in the demonstration of *S. vermiculatus* farming in cages as a livelihood option for self-help group beneficiaries in Tank Village, Sindhudurg District, Maharashtra. The fish seeds were stocked in 4 x 4 x 2 m cages installed in the creek (Salinity 25 ppt). Commercial feed containing 32% crude protein & 8% crude fat was given during the rearing period of 7 months. *S. vermiculatus* attained a total length (24.33±0.88 cm) and body weight (235.0±9.65 g) with the observed specific growth rate (2.16±0.303) as indicated in Figure 1.

The *S. vermiculatus* harvested from the cages totally weighed 103 kg and was sold in the local market at ₹300 per kg. The successful first harvest of Maze Rabbitfish using hatchery supplied fingerlings by ICAR-CMFRI, Karwar has fostered interest among the local fisherfolk to take up farming of this species.

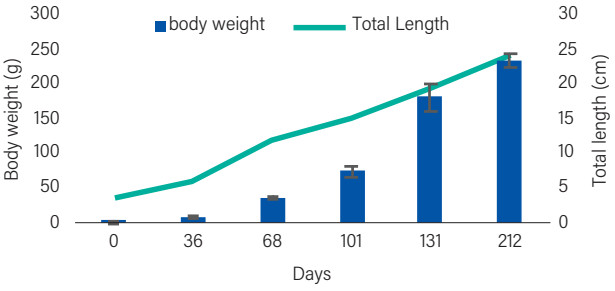

Fig. 1. Growth performance of maze rabbitfish during the cage farming demonstration