

Incidental occurrence of *Aequorea* jellyfish in ring seine landings



On 21 August 2025, at the Azheekal Fisheries Harbour of Kollam district, all ring seine boats reported an unusually large catch of *Rastrelliger kanagurta* (Cuvier, 1816) (Indian mackerel) accompanied by a significant number of jellyfish belonging to the genus *Aequorea*. These jellyfish were intermixed with the mackerel, causing considerable difficulties for the fishermen. Extensive manual effort was required to separate the jellyfish from the fish, leading to delays in the routine auction process at the harbour. Additional labour was needed for sorting, which in turn increased operational costs. Consequently, the overall profit from the day's fishing activities was significantly reduced.

In addition to complicating sorting operations, the jellyfish caused several other operational challenges. Their presence in large numbers clogged the ring seine nets, reducing their filtering efficiency and hampering effective fishing. The labour-intensive task of separating jellyfish from the catch required significant time and effort, and several fishermen reported skin irritation after direct contact with the jellyfish. In some instances, portions of the catch had to be discarded due to the difficulty in separating the fish from the jellyfish and the discomfort caused by handling them. Moreover, the considerable weight of the jellyfish, often brought in along with seawater, placed stress on the nets, leading to

damage that required repair and, in some cases, resulted in lost fishing days. Although the occurrence of *Aequorea* jellyfish is often seasonal, their simultaneous appearance with valuable fish landings such as mackerel disrupts post-harvest handling and marketing. This, in turn, negatively affects the income and economic stability of the ring seine fishery. Regular monitoring of jellyfish swarms is therefore essential to better understand their frequency, intensity, and impact on coastal fisheries and dependent fishing communities.

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