

Kaleidoscope

Emerging commercial importance for Diamondback squid in Kerala and Karnataka

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The incidental catches of Diamondback squid, *Thysanoteuthis rhombus* (Fig.1) has been reported from the Indian EEZ earlier. This monotypic oceanic species belonging to the Family Thysanoteuthidae, is found in tropical and subtropical seas of the world. A large squid species capable of attaining dorsal mantle length (DML) up to 100 cm and weighing about 24 kg, they are listed as Least Concern (<http://dx.doi.org/10.2305/IUCN.UK.2014-1.RLTS.T163228A986608.en.>) according

to IUCN Red List of Threatened species. Incidentally caught in multi-day trawl, hooks and lines (jigs) and gillnets operated in Indian EEZ, they were generally discarded due to the poor market demand. Since 2017, this resource is landed in Karnataka and Kerala due to domestic market demand mainly from the restaurants. Landings of Diamondback squid was recorded in Malpe (MLP) and Mangalore (MNG) Fisheries Harbours of Karnataka and in Munambam (MFH), Cochin (CFH) and Sakthikulangara (SFH) Fisheries Harbours of Kerala. The trawl landings comprised of squids of 15.5–57.0 cm in dorsal mantle size (DML), whereas the larger squids of 57 - 67 cm DML were caught in drift-gillnets and hooks & lines (jigs). The dominant size in the trawl fishery was comprised of 25 cm DML. Major volume of landing occurred during the post-monsoon months, especially September and October with an annual estimated landing of 711 kg in 2017, from these harbours. The squid caught were auctioned and utilized for domestic consumption. The auction rate in the landing centres varied between ₹70 -80 with retail market price reaching ₹100-150 per kilogram. The diamondback squid commands good demand in international market, especially in Japan and Philippines, where the whole squid fetches 9.7 USD/kg and 25 USD/kg for the frozen mantle in retail Japanese market. Even though there is an emerging trend in retaining this species in the trawl catch, some of the trawlers continue to discard under-sized diamondback squids. Appropriate fishing gears to tap these squids in the Arabian Sea, similar to the large artificial jigs, “*arunagashi*”, which are set in the 100 m zone in the Sea of Japan, can be explored.

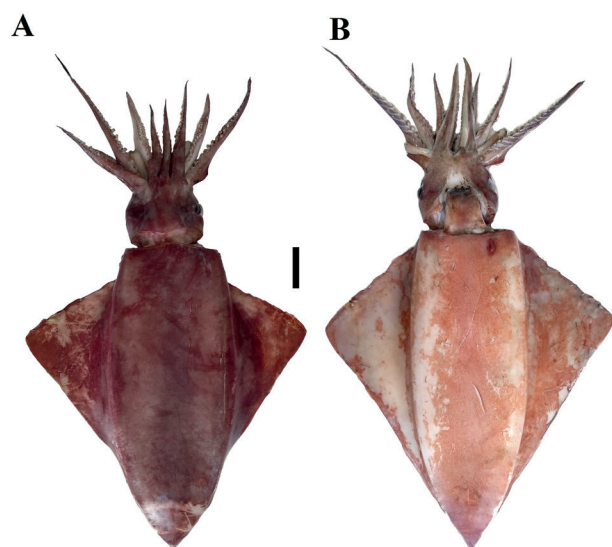


Fig. 1. Dorsal (A) and ventral (B) view of mature female *Thysanoteuthis rhombus* (67cm DML) caught from southeastern Arabian Sea (scale=10 cm)