

Kaleidoscope

# Dried tuna for export as a small scale industry in Andhra Pradesh

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Yellowfin tuna (*Thunnus albacares*) formed an average 33.5% of the total tuna catch of Andhra Pradesh, during the past decade. Fishing grounds for yellowfin tuna off northern Andhra Pradesh at depths of 200 m and

more are gainfully exploited by the local fishers since 2002 using motorized crafts (*theppas*) with hooks and lines and trolls. Since 2006 a few mechanized trawlers were also converted to long liners for catching tunas.



Fig. 1. Ladies collecting the tuna loins after drying in sunlight



Fig. 2. Sorted tuna loins ready for packing

Targeted yellowfin tuna fishing contributes significantly to the marine landings of Andhra Pradesh and also to marine export.

Salt dried tuna is prepared by fishers of Machilipatnam based at Gilakaladindi Fisheries Harbour of Krishna district, Andhra Pradesh. Yellowfin tuna (*Thunnus albacares*), skipjack (*Katsuwonus pelamis*) and little tunny (*Euthynnus affinis*), which are landed in good quantity but fetch less value in local markets are taken up for semi processing and value addition. The process involves, boiling around 700 kg of semi dressed fish for two hours in steel utensils with water having 5 kg of salt added. After boiling, fish is kept as such

overnight for curing and next day each fish is cut into 4 to 6 pieces (depending on size) or loins. After removing head and spine, these are dried for four days in sunlight. Dried loins are graded according to size and packed in polythene bags and transported to Thoothukudi in Tamil Nadu, from where they are exported to Sri Lanka. Usually women are involved in this venture as they purchase the raw material, process, dry and pack the tuna products. Fresh tuna fish are purchased at ₹20 to 25 per kg and the final dried product is sold at wholesale rate of ₹80 to 200 per kg based on the size grade, with larger loins fetching higher prices. This processing and export of dried tuna from Andhra Pradesh started in 2018.