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PRAWN CULTURE PROVED HIGHLY PROFITABLE IN PONDICHERRY*

A natural small pond formed by tidal effect of the sea (Coramandal Coast) near Moorthikuppam-Puthukuppam village, about 21 km south of Pondicherry was selected for an experiment in commercial prawn culture. The pond with muddy bottom is about 1 acre in area and situated adjoining Uppanar river which is a branch of Ponnai river. Initially natural stocking was carried out by letting in water from the river at high tide through the sluice gate provided for the pond. In addition 5,000 prawn seeds of species *Penaeus semisulcatus*, *P. indicus* and *P. monodon* were also collected and stocked in the pond on December 12, 1979.

The water in the pond was maintained at a level of about 1 m depth. Manuring with 500 kg of cow dung was carried out in the pond towards the beginning of the experiment. The culture was maintained for 80 days by which time the river mouth was closed. Due to lack of tidal inflow and replenishment of the water, considerable increase in temperature and salinity of the water to 30°C and 31‰ respectively was noticed. Mortality of some prawns also occurred. As it was evident that the stock could not be retained any further, the prawns were harvested on completion of 80 days of culture on March 3, 1980. 330 kg of prawns (Figs. 1 & 2), 200 kg of fishes and 50 kg of crabs were obtained by the final harvesting, realising a net profit of Rs. 10,860/- from natural as well as intensive stocking. Details of expenditure and income are given in Table 1. Since a pond which was in existence and used for prawn culture by natural stocking was used for the experiment, no expenses for the preparation of the pond are included in the cost economics.

*Prepared by L. Chidambaram, C.M.F.R.I.

Table 1. Income and expenditure account of the prawn culture experiment at Pondicherry.

| Expenditure | (Rs) | Value realised | (Rs) |
|--------------|-------------|--------------------------------|--------|
| Cost of seed | 140.00 | <i>P. semisulcatus</i> -180 kg | |
| Manuring | 200.00 | (18-22 count) @ Rs 50/kg | 9,000 |
| Watchman | 900.00 | <i>P. monodon</i> -20 kg | |
| Harvesting | 300.00 | (20 count) @ Rs 50/kg | 1,000 |
| Total | 1540.00 | <i>P. indicus</i> 130 kg | |
| | | (60 count) @ Rs 15/kg | 1,950 |
| | | Fishes 200 kg | 400 |
| | | Crabs 50 kg | 50 |
| | | Total | 12,400 |
| Net profit | 12,400—1540 | = | 10,860 |

The experiment is the first of its kind in Pondicherry state. The encouraging results would show that there is considerable scope for expansion of prawn culture in this area. The culture work was carried out by Thiru C. Narayanaswamy, a fisherman by profession and a panchayat leader, who has undergone training in prawn culture at Madras Research Centre of CMFRI. The experiment was carried out under the technical guidance of Thiru L. Chidambaram of CMFRI and Thiru N. E. Kirubakaran Paul, Regional Inspector of Fisheries of Pondicherry. Based on the results obtained, action has been initiated to bring several acres of adjacent areas under intensive prawn culture.

