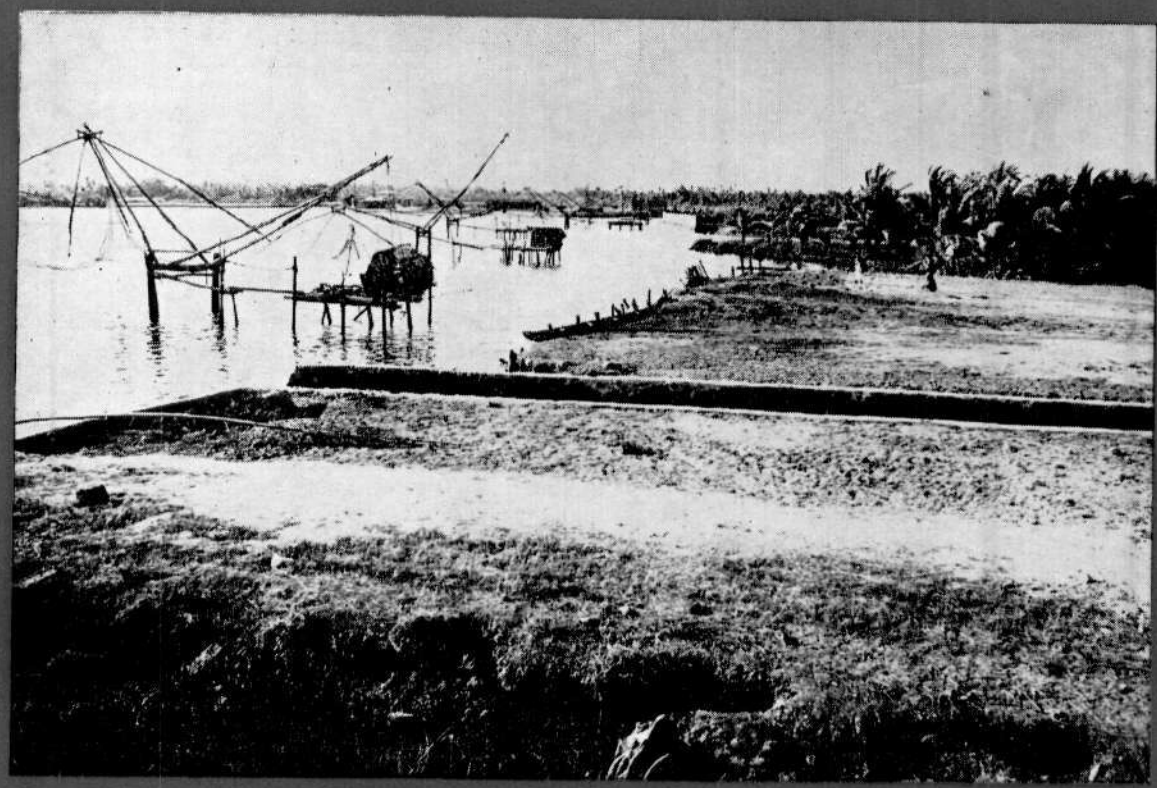




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A NOTE ON AN UNUSUAL OCCURRENCE OF HORSE MACKEREL *MEGALASPIS CORDYLA* (LINNAEUS) IN THE KOVALAM BAY, MADRAS*

On 4th February, 1986, an unusual landing of *Megalaspis cordyla* was observed in the shore-seine catches from the Kovalam bay. From the earlier reports it was observed that the fishery of Kovalam was mainly supported by the lesser sardine, silverbellies, caranx, perches, sciaenids and elasmobranchs. In the present instance a total of 980 numbers of horse mackerel with an average weight of 1,015 g were obtained. An estimated total catch of 1,107.7 kg fish fetched a revenue of Rs. 5,990/- on that day which was an all time record for this fish.

The length of the fish landed measured between 390 and 520 mm and the modal value was at 400-440 mm which contributed 66% of the landings. The weight

ranged between 700 and 1,400 g with an average of 1,015 g.

Environmental parameters showed that the salinity, temperature and dissolved oxygen of the surface water were 32.02‰, 29°C and 4.32 ml/l respectively. The sea was calm and clear. The water current was moving gently from the northern side to southern side. The wind direction was towards south and its velocity was very low.

Analysis of stomach contents showed the presence of *Acetes indicus* which was also recorded in abundant quantities in the boat seine catches operated prior to the shore-seine operation.

It is likely that these shoaling fishes would have followed the prey (*Acetes indicus*) towards the shore where they were netted.

*Reported by R. Thangavelu, P. Poovannan and K. Sahul Hameed, Madras Research Centre of CMFRI, Madras.

