

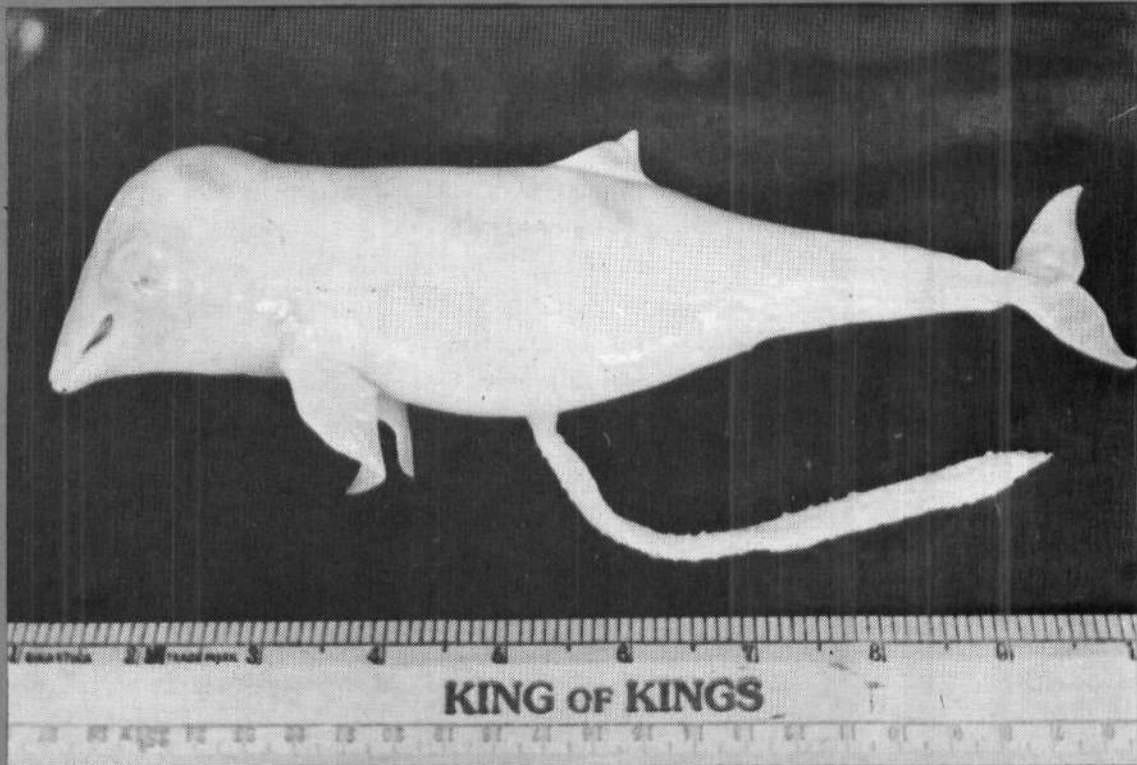


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A CHECK - LIST OF GASTROPODS LANDED AT SAKTHIKULANGARA - NEENDAKARA AREA*

Many commercially important gastropods are landed as by-catch of shrimp trawlers at Sakthikulangara-Neendakara area along with prawns, fishes, crustaceans and cephalopods. Recent observations on the landings of molluscan shells indicate that 29 species of gastropods and a few bivalves are landed as by-catch of shrimp trawlers and there is an increasing trend in the quantity landed (Fig. 1). Meat of two species of edible whelks, *Babylonia spirata* and *B. zeylanica* (Fig. 2) were exported since early 1993. Other gastropods are utilised mainly for shell handicraft trade (Fig. 3). Taking into consideration the importance of these groups, a check-list of gastropods landed, their abundance and common names are given in Table 1.

Two species of edible whelks locally known as 'Pravumutta shank' ranks first in abundance among the gastropod landings. Whelks assume importance in recent years since the meat of these seashells are exported in fairly good quantities from India to Japan since July 1993. The analysis of samples of both the species of whelks indicates that the total length of *B. spirata* ranged from 25-51 mm and *B. zeylanica* from 37-60 mm, the latter growing to a larger size. The length-



Fig. 1. Shells being graded.

TABLE 1. List of gastropods, their abundance and common names

Species	Common name	Magnitude of occurrence
<i>Turritella attenuata</i>	Screw/Turret shell	++
<i>Polystira</i> sp.	"	+
<i>Crassispira</i> sp.	"	+
<i>Architectonica perspectiva</i>	Staircase/Sundial shell	0
<i>Epitonium scalaris</i>	Ladder shell	0
<i>Xenophora</i> sp.	Carrier shell	+
<i>Tibia curta</i>	Wing shell	+++
<i>Natical albula</i>	Naticas/Moon shell	0
<i>Natica lineata</i>	"	0
<i>Phallium glaucum</i>	Helmet shell	+
<i>Phallium canaliculatum</i>	"	+
<i>Bursa spinosa</i>	Purse/Frog shell	+++
<i>Tonna dolium</i>	Tun shell	+
<i>Ficus ficus</i>	Fig shell	0
<i>Rapana bulbosa</i>	Purple shell	++
<i>Murex trapa</i>	Venus comb/murex shell	++
<i>Murex virgineus</i>	"	0
<i>Murex badius</i>	"	0
<i>Murex</i> sp.	"	0
<i>Babylonia spirata</i>	Whelk	+++
<i>Babylonia zeylanica</i>	"	+++
<i>Hemifusus pugilinus</i>	Hairy crown conch	+
<i>Fusinus toreuma</i>	Spindle shell	0
<i>Oliva gibbosa</i>	Olive shell	+
<i>Oliva</i> sp.	"	0
<i>Xancus pyrum</i>	Sacred chank	++
<i>Harpa conoidalis</i>	Harp shell	+
<i>Conus glans</i>	Cone shell	++
<i>Conus</i> sp.	"	0

+++ abundant, ++ very common, + moderately common, 0 occasional.

* Prepared by M. Babu philip, Guilon Field Centre of CMFRI, Guilon and K.K. Appukuttan, CMFRI, Cochin-682 014.



Fig. 2. *Babylonia* spp.

frequency distribution (Fig. 4) shows that in *B. spirata* 32-47 mm dominated the catch with peak mode at 40-43 mm whereas in *B. zeylanica* 44-55 mm dominated with peak mode at 52-55 mm. The boiled meat weight was approximately 35%. The total whelk meat export for 18 months from July 1993 to December 1994 is around 175 tonnes. The ornamental shells are graded and packed in gunny bags (Fig. 1) and sent to shell trade centres in Tamil Nadu.

Appukuttan and Phillip (*Seafood Export Journal*, 25 (21):5-17, 1994) reported for the first time the details of whelk landings and whelk meat trade at Sakthikulangara-Neendakara area and noted whelks as an emerging resource in the by-catch of shrimp trawlers. The analysis and close scrutiny of by-catch from other major shrimp landing centres along east and west coasts may reveal the occurrence of these gastropods in exploitable quantities. The possibilities of increased landings of whelks and expansion of shell based handicraft trade are bright.

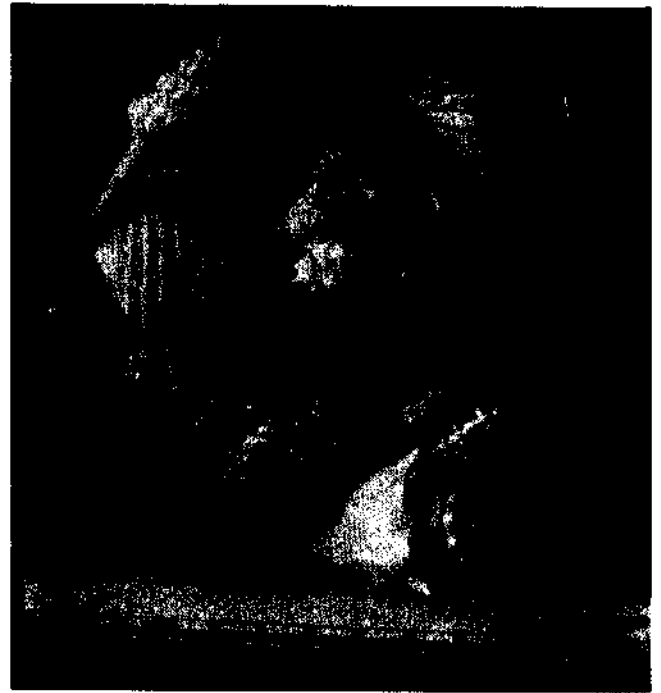


Fig. 3. A collection of ornamental gastropods.

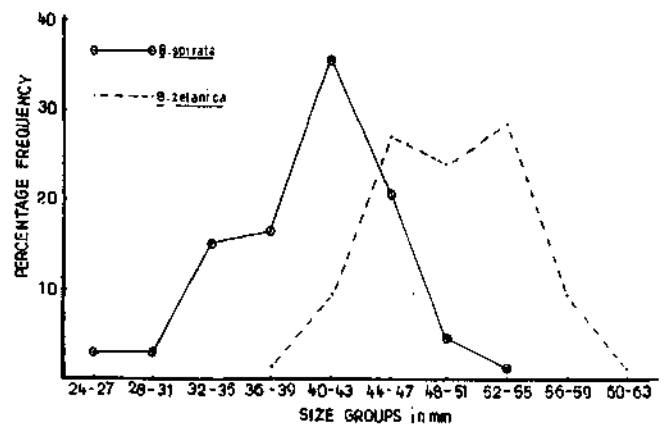


Fig. 4. Percentage of length frequency of *Babylonia spirata* and *B. zeylanica*.