

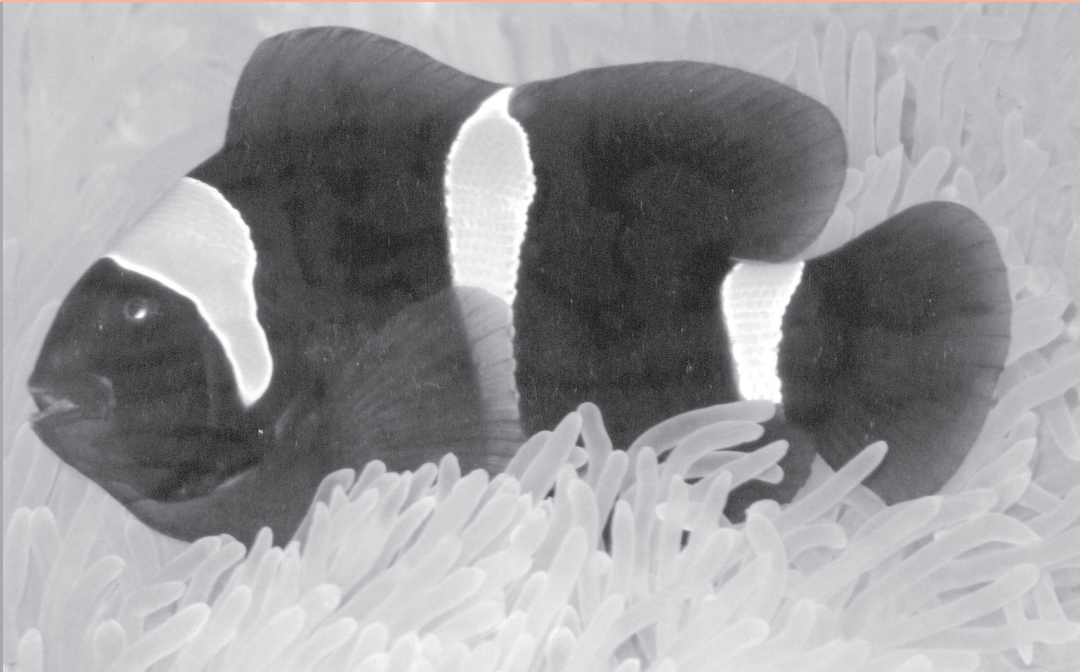
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High catch of rock lobster *Panulirus polyphagus* landed at New Ferry Wharf, Mumbai

Spiny rock lobsters are distributed all along the Indian coast, but the major landings come from the north west coast bordering Gujarat and Maharashtra that contribute about 70% to the total landings in the country. Along the north west coast, 95% of the lobsters are caught by trawlers and landed at Veraval in Gujarat and Mumbai in Maharashtra.

Commercial lobster fishery in Mumbai is supported mainly by rock lobster, *Panulirus polyphagus*. It is caught throughout the year, but the fishery displays seasonal abundance during September-December.

During September'06 an unprecedented high catch (Fig. 1) of rock lobster was landed by

trawlers at New Ferry Wharf. On 2-9-06, ninety-three trawlers landed about 8.8 t of rock lobster with an average catch of 95 kg per trawler. The fishing ground was towards north west at a depth of 40-50 m and the fishing continued for 8-10 days. The other major catch on that day was ribbon fish (65.1 t) and sciaenids (55.8 t) but the prawn catch was extremely poor. The total income generated by lobsters alone was Rs. 50 lakhs, which was about 50% of the total income generated from the entire fish catch.

A total of 66 males were measured from the catch on 2-9-06 and the size ranged between 145 to 385 mm with the mean size at 248



Fig. 1. Trawl catch of *Panulirus polyphagus* at Mumbai

mm. Ninety-seven females were measured and the size ranged between 215 mm to 375 mm and the mean size was 264 mm. A catch of similar magnitude was also observed on

16-9-06.

The catch was segregated at the landing centre depending upon the size. The price at the landing centre was Rs. 592/kg. Lobsters with soft body and damaged body parts were removed. Before weighing, the berried females were squeezed to remove water from the eggs. The catch was iced and packed immediately in plastic crates to prevent any damage.

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