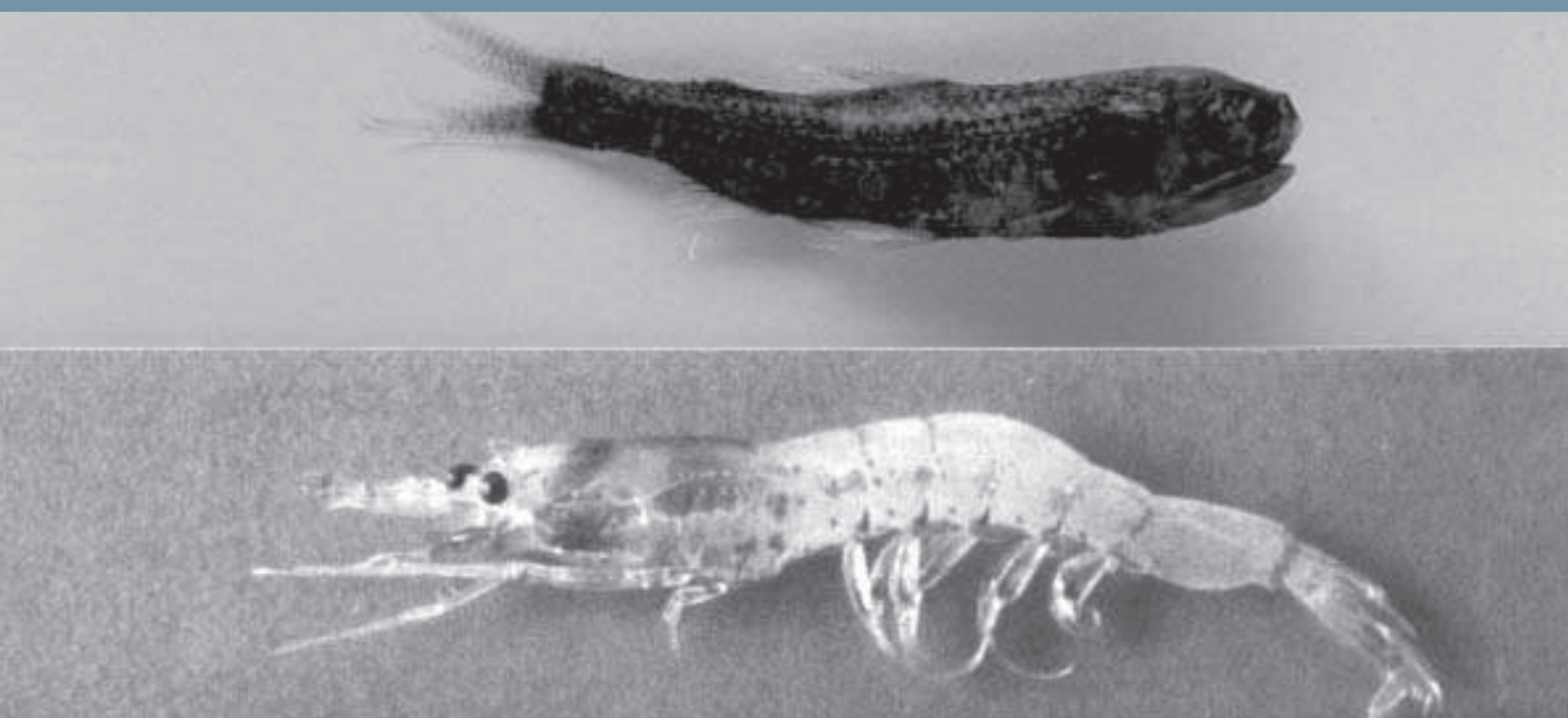




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Unusual heavy landings of Bombayduck by trawlers at New Ferry Wharf, Mumbai during October-December

Harpadon nehereus (Ham.) commonly known as 'Bombay duck' and locally called "*Bombil*" exercise a direct influence upon the livelihood of artisanal fishermen along the northwest coast of India as 90% of Bombayduck catch in India is from this region. The major portion of the catch is landed in Satpati-Dahanu area of Maharashtra and Jaffrabad-Nawabunder area of Gujarat. The season for Bombayduck lasts from September to May, with the bulk of landings taking place during October-December.

Bombayduck is exploited by indigenous *dol* net, operated up to 40m depth. Over the years the landings of Bombayduck has indicated a downward swing from

dol sectors but landings of Bombayduck by trawlers at New Ferry Wharf has increased. The catch comprises of large sized fishes (90 to 315 mm) and the fishing area is usually northwest bordering Gujarat.

In Maharashtra the catch of Bombayduck over the last ten years has shown a declining trend. New Ferry Wharf is the only landing centre in Maharashtra where the catch of Bombayduck has gradually increased over the last five years. It is mainly because of trawlers being used for this fishery off Jaffrabad-Nawabunder, fishing at a depth of 30-40 m. Landings of Bombayduck at New Ferry Wharf is comparatively higher than at Sassoon Docks and Versova.



Fig. 1. Catch of Bombayduck filled in big bamboo baskets

For the last three years the Bombayduck catch has increased remarkably at New Ferry Wharf from 2175 t in the year 2001 for the period October-December to 4273 t for the year 2003 for the same period with a corresponding increase in CPUE from 339.84 kg/trip to 549.33 kg/trip respectively. The total estimated monthly catch for December'03 was exceptionally high at 1797 t with a catch per trip of 684.62 kg contributing 18.53% of the total estimated monthly catch.

Bombayduck was traditionally dried and marketed, but of late there is an increasing demand for fresh Bombayduck. Special wooden platforms for sun drying of Bombay duck are still prevalent at many places such as Cuffe Parade, Worli, Versova, Khardhanda, Madh, Gorai, Uttan, Bassein Koliwada, Vasai, Arnala and Satpati.

Bombayduck fetched Rs.10/kg during this period. Eighty percent of the catch was for drying and the remaining sold fresh in the local market.

Bombayduck catch was thoroughly washed and the viscera removed for quick sun drying. The sun-dried fish was sold through three outlets viz. merchants at local landing centers (40%), dry fish market such as Sewri and Marol (40%) and at other retail markets

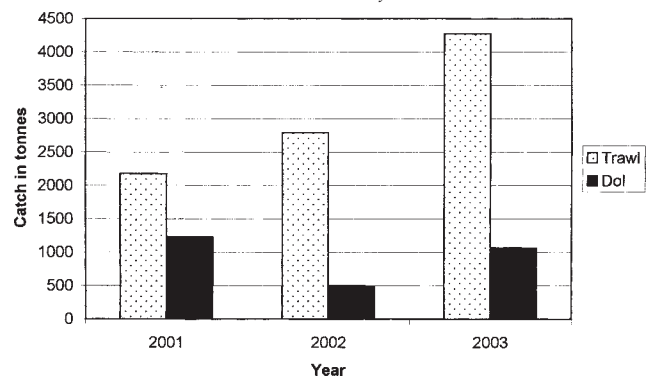


Fig. 2. Trawl and Dol catch of Bombayduck

(20%).

During October to December'03 heavy landings were recorded on 22.10.03 (198 t), 7.11.03 (130 t) and 5.12.03 (153 t) at New Ferry Wharf. The size of the specimens landed on 5.12.03 was small ranging between 90 to 200 mm. This catch was carried off immediately from the landing center by handcarts with the fish being filled in huge plastic bags and big baskets (Fig. 1) and transported to destinations such as Cuffe Parade, Versova, Worli, Madh, Vasai and even far as Arnala for drying.

Bombayduck is not a target species for trawl, while returning after completing fishing activity, the trawlers fish in the *dol* net fishing grounds. Due to this practice they completely sweep the *dol* net fishing grounds resulting in a drastic decline in Bombayduck catches by *dol*, affecting the traditional *dol* net fishery at Uttan, Bassein Koliwada, Vasai, Arnala and Satpati. Bombayduck catch by trawl from New Ferry Wharf and *dol* catch from Arnala during the period October-December is presented in Fig.2 for comparison.

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