

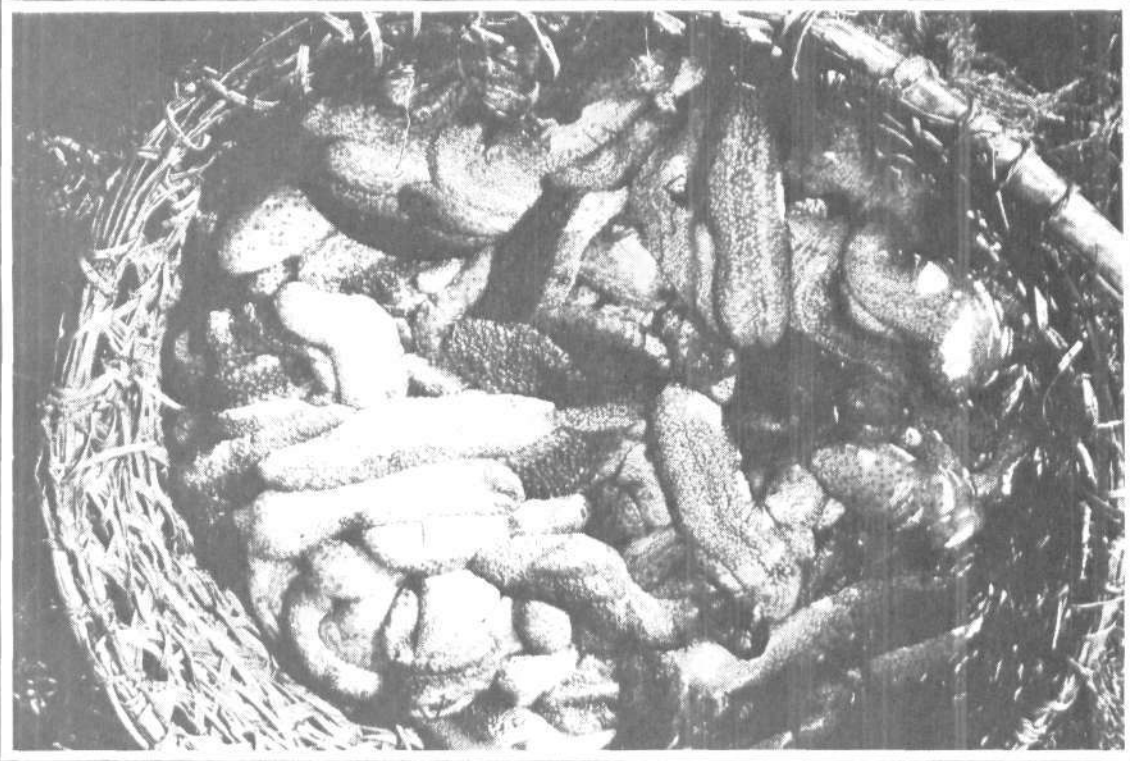


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On the oil sardine landings along the Tuticorin coast during 1996*

The fishery for the Indian oil sardine *Sardinella longiceps* is important along the west coast of India. Its occurrence along the east coast is only sporadic and infrequent. However, it formed a sizeable fishery (4,561 tonnes) in Mandapam area in the year 1992 (*Mar. Fish. Infor. Serv., T & E Ser., Room No. 117*).

Every year a few tonnes of oil sardines used to be landed at Tuticorin. But there was no landing of oil sardines during 1992 - 1994. In 1995, they reappeared and 77 tonnes were landed (*Mar. Fish Inter. Serv., T & E Ser. Room No. 130*). During December 1996 118 tonnes



Fig. 1. Oil sandines being removed from the net after landing.

of oil sardines were landed (Table 1) being caught in the sardine gill net. The increase in the landing of oil sardine was by 30% over the previous year.

TABLE 1 Estimated fishing effort (no. of units) and catch (kg) of oil sardine at Tuticorin during 1996

Months	Catch	Units	Total catch
January	Nil	2,832	-
February	-	2,929	-
March	-	2,288	-
April	-	4,128	-
May	-	1,642	-
June	-	3,263	-
July	-	2,188	-
August	-	3,274	-
September	-	3,013	-
October	-	2,662	-
November	-	3,572	-
December	1,17,415	1,644	1,17,415
Total	1,17,415	33,435	1,17,415

The size range of the oil sardines was 120-185 mm with dominant mode, at 170 -175 mm. The minimum weight of a specimen was 15 g and the maximum 45 g. Females dominated the catches (49.7%) while the males formed 26.5% and the indeterminates, 23.8%. Regarding the sexual maturity, 54.5% of them were in the resting stages, 8.4% in the III and IV stages of maturity and 13.3% in the immature stage. Almost all the catch was transported to Kerala State for better prices. The oil sardine was sold locally at the rate of rupees 3 to 5 per kg.

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* Reported by G. Arumugam, Tuticorin Research Centre of CMFRI, Tuticorin - 628 001, India.