

## HOOKS and line fishery of cuttle fish from the artificial trap at Blangad, Thrissur

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About 300 fibre boats fitted with outboard engine are coming to Blangad Landing Centre from Tamil

Nadu (Kollamgodu, Neerodi, Enayam, Thoothur and Muttam) for *Sepia* fishing during October - March

period. The type of gear used is hooks and line. At the end of a thread, four hooks (no.10) are attached and above the hooks, some weight wrapped with glittering silvery ribbon attached to attract the animal.

Traps are prepared to attract the cuttle fish. Thirty numbers of coconut spadix are tied together with a plastic rope (Fig.1). This unit is attached to sacks fitted with sand as weight to keep the spadix stand erect. This type of bundle units is placed at the bottom of the sea about 30 to 50 fathom depth. Each boat places 25 numbers of this type of artificial units at



Fig. 1. Coconut spadix used as a substratum for the attachment of cuttlefish eggs

different parts of sea. GPS readings are also taken for the units. After 5 to 7 days, fishing is started using above mentioned type of hooks and line, from the artificial structure. It is during this period that the species is coming in large numbers towards the structure for laying eggs.

At this time, fishing starts using the above mentioned gear while the animal tries to bite glittering ribbon. The ribbon and then the thread in which the hooks are fitted, is dragged and the animal is trapped in the hook. Some of the boats earn about Rs.10,000- to rupees one lakh. The weight of each specimen ranged from 500 g to 2.5 kg. Price per kg is in range of Rs. 175 - 200/-.

Once the availability of *sepia* is reduced, new structures are erected at different locations. The cost of each coconut spadix ranges from Rs. 2.50 - 3.50. When enough coconut spadix are not available in Kerala, they are purchased from Tamil Nadu and brought in lorries. Most of the structures deposited in the sea, are being destroyed accidentally by trawlers.

Fishing of this type is resisted in areas like Kara and Kathiyalam in Thrissur District. Some boats which conducted this type of fishing, have been burnt at Koottai in Malapuram District. It is said that the availability of these species in trawlers, is badly affected or reduced due to this kind of exploitation.