

Observations on the landing of *Odonus niger* at Mangalore

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The redtoothed triggerfish (*Odonus niger*) of the family Balistidae is a reef associated species landed by trawl nets operated along the Karnataka coast. This species forms dense aggregations in inshore waters and were not targeted till recently due to their poor market demand. The triggerfish shoals are intentionally avoided by the trawlers and the incidental catches are either discarded or brought ashore when there is available deck space for storage. Such small quantities landed are auctioned along with the miscellaneous fish groups. Some interest was evinced on this species by the fish meal traders due to limited availability of raw materials during the year 2008. Consequently, it was segregated onboard and preserved on the deck in fresh condition for auctioning separately. The triggerfish fishery along the Mangalore coast was monitored during January-May. The triggerfish landings increased from 84 t in January to 181 t in February and thereafter reduced to 13 t in May (Fig. 1). The catch rates in multi-night trawlers ranged from 200- 1500 kg unit⁻¹, and the quayside price realised was ₹ 4 per kg. The size range of the species in the commercial landing was 110 to 175 mm with 125-140 mm dominating the fishery (Fig. 2). The resource was mainly transported to fish meal plants in Kerala for being used as a constituent in poultry feed. Later in the year 2009, the species was landed along with the miscellaneous groups, except in January and February, due to the increased availability of oilsardines for fish meal plants.

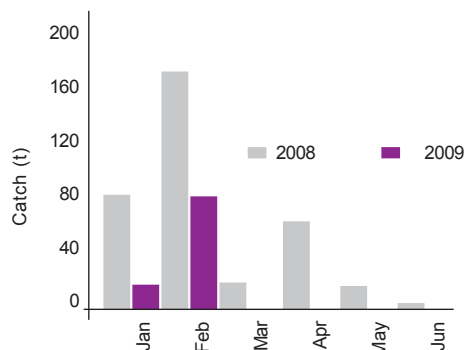


Fig. 1. Monthly landings of *Odonus niger* at Mangalore (2008-2009)

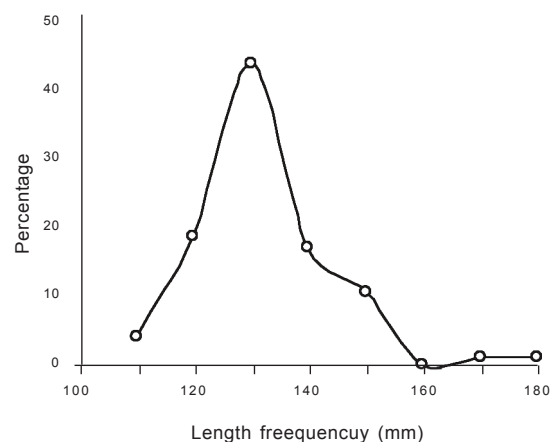


Fig. 2. Length composition of *Odonus niger* in the commercial landings



Fig. 3. Triggerfish heap on the deck of trawler



Fig. 4. Triggerfish ready for transportation