

# Bumper landings of skipjack tuna (*Katsuwonus pelamis*) by hooks and lines at Visakhapatnam Fishing Harbour

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Bumper landings of skipjack tuna, *Katsuwonus pelamis* was observed at Visakhapatnam Fishing Harbour on 28<sup>th</sup> October 2011, wherein about 42 t were landed by hooks and lines (Fig.1).

On this day, climatic conditions changed drastically wherein the direction of wind changed from north-east to south-east and the wind speed increased from <10 m/sec to 10-15 m/sec. The



Fig. 1. *Katsuwonus pelamis* landed by hooks and lines at Visakhapatnam Fishing Harbour

current pattern was hence in the same direction as that of wind, as because in the east coast during the onset of winter, the direction of current is from south-east.

About 80% of the catch was landed by the non-motorised sector and the remaining 20% by motorised crafts. The landings were from three fishing villages viz., Jalaripeta, Uppada and Bheemunipatnam with an average catch of 250 kg/craft. Each line of length varying from 200 to 300 m was equipped with 10 to 20 hooks, operated at a depth of 70 to 100 m. The other species landed in association with skipjack tuna were yellowfin tuna (*Thunnus albacares*), sailfish (*Istiophorus platypterus*), marlin (*Makaira indica*), dolphinfish (*Coryphaena hippurus*), carangids (*Caranx* sp.) and spotted seer fish (*Scomberomorus guttatus*) with catches of 2 t, 1.75 t, 1.25 t, 0.3 t, 0.075 t and 0.07 t, respectively.

The length of *K. pelamis* landed varied from 440 to 650 mm FL with corresponding weight ranging from

1333 to 4700 g. Biological investigations revealed that majority of the stock were in spent and recovery phase. Catch was auctioned at a price of ₹ 50-60 /kg to the fish merchants. The sudden reversal in wind direction associated with the current pattern in the same direction could have influenced the movement of the species which have migrated from offshore to nearshore waters, hence accounting for this sudden increase in catch. Moreover skipjack tuna is known to breed in deepsea along the east coast during July - August and then migrate to coastal waters for feeding during the winter months, which could also have contributed to this sudden increase in catch. This is further substantiated by the fact that in majority of the fishes (55%), the gut was in gorged condition. The catch was negligible during previous couple of months, wherein a total of 5 t were landed together from mid of August to mid of October. This is the highest reported landing of skipjack tuna from Visakhapatnam Fishing Harbour on a single day.