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At Kasimedu Fishing Harbour, Chennai, about 40-50 multiday thangal trawlers operate regularly. Out of this, 3-6 trawlers operated daily for deepsea prawns during the period Feb - April, 2008. Deepsea fishes were landed along with deepsea prawns. An unusually high catch of the cusk eel *Monomitopus nigripinnis* (Family: Ophidiidae) was recorded during the said period. The deepsea fishing operations were carried out in the south-east direction within a distance of 40-60 km at a depth of 150-200 fathoms. The same species came in 2009 also in low quantities. Fishes of this family are known to occur along the Indian coast. A list of the different species of Ophidiidae recorded from Indian waters is given in Table 1.

The size of *M. nigripinnis* landed at Chennai varied from 216 to 415 mm TL, with dominant mode

Table 1. Species of ophidiidae occurring in Indian waters

Species	Area of occurrence
<i>Bassozetus gletinosus</i>	Off Madras coast and Bay of Bengal
<i>Brotula multibarbata</i>	Indian Ocean
<i>Enchelybrotula paucidens</i>	Indian Ocean
<i>Glyptophtidium argenteum</i>	Off Malabar coast
<i>Holcomycteronus pterotus</i>	Indian coast
<i>Monomitopus cenjugator</i>	Off Malabar coast
<i>Monomitopus nigripinnis</i>	Bay of Bengal
<i>Neobythites statiticus</i>	Bay of Bengal
<i>Tauredophtidium hextii</i>	Indo-west Pacific and Malabar coast

Source: Fish base, 99

at 300-319 mm. The weight ranged from 72-415 g. Most of the fishes had empty stomachs. Fishes with food in the stomachs showed a dominance of deepsea prawns. Fishes in fresh condition, are sold at ₹ 50/kg, and used for human consumption. Fishes in spoilt condition were sold at ₹ 20/kg and used for preparing dry fish and fish meal.



Fig. 1. *Monomitopus nigripinnis* landed at Chennai