

Heavy landings of bigeye and pinjalo snappers at Chennai Fisheries Harbour

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Among the major perches landed at Chennai Fisheries Harbour, snappers and rock cods formed dominant groups followed by pigface breems. Among snappers, more than 15 species were recorded at Chennai Fisheries Harbour during 2009 (Table 1). In trawl net, *Lutjanus lutjanus* (29.9%) formed the dominant catch followed by *L. rivulatus* and *L. malabaricus*. In mechanised gillnet, *L. rivulatus* (33.7%) formed the major catch followed by *L. malabaricus* and *Pinjalo pinjalo*. In hooks and line, *L. rivulatus* (34.4%) formed the major catch followed by *L. lutjanus*, *L. malabaricus* and *L. argentimaculatus*. The other lutjanids landed were *Aphareus rutilans*, *Aprion virescens* and *Pristipomoides filamentosus*. *Lutjanus lutjanus* was landed throughout the year by trawl nets. Unusually heavy catch of big eye snapper (*L. lutjanus*) was landed, about 8.5 t, 3.2 t, and 2 t by multiday *thangal* trawlers during July, August and September, 2009, respectively. Heavy landings (1.2 t) of *L. lutjanus* by multiday *thangal* trawlers at Chennai Fisheries Harbour was observed on 23-07-2009. Fresh fishes were auctioned at ₹ 60/kg. Eighty specimens of *L. lutjanus* were collected and analysed for biological aspects. The size ranged between 130 and 289 mm with weight range of 30-270 g, 53.3% of females were mature and others were immature. Stomach contents comprised prawn (50%), crab (30%), *Stolephorus* spp. (6%), others (14%) and most of the stomachs was half full.

On 07.07.2011, juveniles of *L. lutjanus* (1.5 t.) were landed by multiday *thangal* trawlers. Sample of 140 specimens of *L. lutjanus* were collected for biological studies. The size ranged between 80-209 mm and the weight range was 9-140 g; females were immature.

Gut contents comprised of prawns (40%), crabs (35%), *Stolephorus* spp. (8%), and others (17%). In most of the fishes, stomach was empty.

Among the snappers, *Pinjalo pinjalo* locally called as “periya kizhichan”, formed 9.3%, 10.2%, and 8% of the total fish catch by trawl net, mechanised gillnet and hooks and line respectively. Unusually, on 19-02-2011, heavy landing of large sized *P. pinjalo* of about 1.6 t were landed by mechanised gillnets. The size range of *P. pinjalo* was 480-680 mm with dominant mode at 620 mm. The weight ranged from 4.5 to 6.5 kg. The fishes were auctioned at ₹ 200/kg .



Fig. 1. *Lutjanus lutjanus*



Fig. 2. Catch of *Pinjalo pinjalo* at Chennai Fisheries Harbour

Pair trawling at Sakthikulangara

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In 2011, the medium sized fishing boats operating from Sakthikulangara opted for a different mode of fishing. During this period, usually they used to have a good catch of *Parapenaeopsis stylifera* and other prawns but the catch existed for a shorter period. This prompted these fishermen to opt for a different mode



Fig. 1. Net used for pair trawling at Sakthikulangara

called pair-trawling (local term *Nikathipani*), in which two boats operate as a single unit with 10-12 crew members. The gear used is a trawl net of mesh size 200-160-120-80-40-15 mm (code end mesh size). This gear is characterised by large floats tied towards the mouth part and towards the bottom three stones are



Fig. 2. *Pampus argenteus* landed by pair trawling at Sakthikulangara