SOME ASPECTS OF GEAR USED IN PRAWN FISHERY IN JAFFNA LAGOON

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Most of the current production of prawns in the northern part of Sri Lanka comes from the Jaffna Lagoon. Structure of the grars, total catch, size of species composition and seasonal variations were studied over a period of one year from Janaury to December 1986 in an effort to understand prawn fishery in the Jaffna Lagoon and to adopt effective management measures to improve yields.

The main gear used in prawn fishery in the Jaffna Lagoon are Sirahu valai, Raal koodu, Kandi and Drag net. Sirahu valai collects the largest prawans and is less efficient (4.08Kg/operation per day) and more expensinve than the other gears. Kandi, the cheapest of the gears, is operated only at a few locaions in the lagoon and is being abandoned due to its poor efficiency (0.77Kg/operation day). A Raal koodu unit coasts half that of Sirahu valai, two times that of Drag net and four times that of Kandi. Raal koodu is becoming increasingly popular because of its mobility, easy installation, fair cost and efficiency. Raal koodu has a catch/unit of effort of 4.38Kg/operation day.

The Drag net with an average catch per unit of effort of 5.88Kg/operation day, is the most productive. However, this collects the smallest in all the species, especially during the months May and October. Restriction of the use of the Drag net during the months of May and October in the Jaffna Lagoon is therefore recommended.

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