

## **D-73: Clam and cockle fishery in Puttalam lagoon**

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A seasonal fishery of clams and cockles exists in Dutch Bay, Puttalam Lagoon, during the off season of the marine fishery. The present study was

carried out to determine the species composition of the catch, and to estimate the annual production of this fishery as part of a research programme on the study of biology and population dynamics of the species contributing to this bivalve fishery.

The 3 species harvested in Puttalam Lagoon are *Gafrarium tumidum*, *Marcia hiantina* and *M. opima*. About 60 fishing families are engaged in the fishery, which generally lasts from April to September. The mean annual yield from the fishery during 1992 -1993 was estimated to be 1,151 tonnes. *G. tumidum* accounts for about 88.5% of the catch. The contributions of *M. hiantina* and *M. opima* were 9.7% and 1.8% respectively.

Average monthly income per fisherman during the harvesting season was estimated to range from Rs.193 to Rs.1,678 with a mean of Rs.1,217.

The sustenance of the fishery for bivalves, in Dutch Bay was important because it provides employment during off season of marine fishery. Also, this fishery is useful in resource management of marine fisheries, because it helps to control the fishing pressure on finfish stocks in the marine environment.