

**D-12 Biology and fishery of rainbow runner (*Elagatis bipinnatus*:
Quoy:Gaimard, 1824) (Perciformes: Carangidae) in the South-west
coast of Sri Lanka**

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Rainbow runner (*Elagatis bipinnatus*) is a semi-oceanic pelagic fish, inhabiting the surface and subsurface waters. It is a tropical fish, however, its distribution is not uniform in the tropics.

The objectives of the present study were to report the species composition, diet, seasonal variation in size, and weights, age and the total catch of rainbow runner in the west coast of Sri Lanka.

The study was started in 1992 and is continuing. Negombo and Beruwala fish landing centres were visited fortnightly for fish sampling. During each visit, the total number of fish landed were counted, their fork lengths were measured and recorded. A total of about 70 randomly selected fish were taken to the laboratory during this period for analysis of diet, age and weights. The stomach contents were identified and the numbers recorded. Weights of fish were taken using a spring balance, length frequency data were analysed according to months. The time spent by fishermen to sail to fishing area and back to port was obtained from individual fishermen to ascertain the fishing area.

The size of the fish caught in the commercial catch ranged from 25 to 135 cm and the distribution varied monthly. The widest size range was observed from September to April, when a large number of small and a few large fish were recorded. The diet of this fish was composed of prawns, crabs, magalopa larvae and small fish.

The weight of fish caught ranged from 222g to 14kg, males weighed more than the females among all lengths. Majority of the fish caught were immature and are less than 2 years old. About 0.5 to 3% of the total number of commercial boats caught Rainbow runner and the number caught per day varied from 3 to 14. The total production of Rainbow runner from the waters of the western coast is about 4 to 6 t.