THE STATUS OF TUNA FISHERIES IN THE ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN

Kaymaram, F. and S. A. Talebzadeh[1]

Artisanal Fisheries

One of the most important Iranian artisanal fisheries targets tunas and tuna-like species . The main species caught are yellowfin and longtail, which accounted for 44.47 % and 25.74 % of the catch in 1996, respectively. The total artisanal catch is shown in Table 1.

Vessels and Gear

Drift gillnetters are engaged in the exploitation of tuna and tuna-like fishes in Iran. These artisanal vessels are built of wood or fibreglass (mostly wood), and their carrying capacities range from 1 to 100t (Kaymaram, 1996). Tuna and tuna-like species are caught with various types of gillnets, with mesh sizes ranging from 110 to 180 mm.

Data Analysis

Data are collected from landing sites using stratified random sampling. Samples cover at least 10 % of active vessels of the different categories (small and medium boats and large *dhows*). The data are entered into computers and the sample figures are raised to total monthly estimates.

Industrial Fisheries

The two Iranian purse seiners were not active in the Oman Sea in 1995. Two Spanish purse seiners, the *Montelape* and *Montealegre,* started fishing in the Oman Sea from the beginning of 1996 under a one-year contract. These two purse seiners were involved in research on myctophids and fishing for tuna, but there is no data for their activities in 1997.

In 1997, an industrial fishing company bought a new purse seiner named *Azadegan 3*. The annual catch of industrial tuna fisheries in 1996-1997 is shown in Table 2.

The catch of one longliner was recorded as 191t from 108 fishing days in 1995. This longliner was active only 11 days in 1996, and its catch was recorded as 13t. In 1997, with 315 fishing days, its catch was recorded as 188t.

Research Activities

The Iranian Fisheries Research Organization (I.F.R.O.) conducts research activities and is responsible for providing data and information for fisheries management and development. This organization is under the auspices of the Iranian Fisheries Company of the Ministry of Jihad. Biological data on five major species of tunas (yellowfin, longtail, skipjack, kawakawa and frigate tuna) are collected at the sampling sites in the two south-eastern provinces (Hormozgan and Sistan-Balouchestan). Morphometric measurements of industrial tuna landings were started in April 1998. The catch data for industrial fisheries are collected by a system of logbooks, which are delivered to I.F.R.O. at the end of each trip.

References

Kaymaram, F. 1996. National Report of the Islamic Republic of Iran. *In* Anganuzzi, A.A., K.A. Stobberup and N.J. Webb (eds.) 1996. Proceedings of the Expert Consultation on Indian Ocean Tunas, 6th Session, Colombo, Sri Lanka. 25-29 September 1995: 373 p.

Table 1. Annual landings (t) of artisanal tuna fisheries in Iran, estimated by Deputy of Planning, Iranian Fisheries Company.

Species	1995	1996
Yellowfin	22,505	28,465
Longtail	27,187	16,475
Skipjack	1,998	2,450
Kawakawa	3,655	5,665
Frigate tuna	4,653*	740
Seerfishes	1,665*	7,900
Billfishes	3,619	2,305
Total	**80,269**	**64,000**

* These figures appear unreliable

Table 2. Annual landings (t) of industrial tuna fisheries in the Oman Sea

Year	Number of purse seiners	Searching days	Total catch	Average catch (t/day)
1996[1]	2	278	8907	32
1997[2]	3	207	1952	9.4

[1] These data are for Spanish purse-seiners; [2] These data are for Iranian purse-seiners

[1] Iranian Fisheries Research organization, P. O. Box 14151-6116, Tehran, Iran