

Project Update: April 2012

The field work was started in August 2011 with a pilot survey to identify sampling sites. Two sampling sites were identified, Harne and Malvan on west coast of India separated by 200 km. First sampling season (post-monsoon sampling season) was carried out from mid-September to mid-October 2011 on both the sampling sites simultaneously. The second sampling season (winter season) was carried out from mid-December 2011 to mid-January 2012 on both the sampling sites simultaneously. Currently, the third sampling (summer season) season is underway in one of the field sites, Harne, while the field work in Malvan field site will start in May 2012. Till now we sampled three main gear types, trawlers (14 samples), gill nets (18 samples) and drag nets (18 samples). We couldn't sample fishing boats which using purse nets as they didn't allowed us to join them on their fishing trip. However, some local purse netters at Malvan field site have now agreed to allow us and we are hopeful to sample purse nets at Malvan field site this season. Overall, we have sampled more than 15 species of commercial fish which get caught in these nets.

As planned earlier, we couldn't use fish otoliths for age structure analysis mainly because reference data for many species from the region was not consistent. As we expect to analyse maximum number of fish species which get caught in the net, we used more consistent fish morphometric data (lengths and widths) instead of otolith, for age structure analysis.

We videoed 39 GB of footage from two field sites in last two seasons. The footage consists of fishermen's interviews as well as actual fishing footage. The footage now will be edited in a form of documentary in order to generate awareness among fishermen and fish consumers regarding current fish decline scenario

By the end of this season we are planning to do collective data analysis and editing of video footage to make a documentary. It would be great if we could get the time by end of September 2012 to submit both the report as well as documentary.