Effect of bait type and size on catch efficiency of narrow-barred Spanish mackerel (Scomberomorus commerson) in the Persian Gulf handline fisheries

In the Persian Gulf handline fishery, fishers mostly use Cutlassfish (Trichiurus lepturus) bait for targeting narrow-barred Spanish mackerel (Scomberomorus commerson). However, Cutlassfish are expensive compared to other baits and also a commercially important species that is typically exported to Asian countries. In order to conserve Cutlassfish resources and reduce costs of fishing, the effect of changing bait type and size on the catch efficiency and size structure of narrow-barred Spanish mackerel caught in the Persian Gulf handline fishery was investigated. The alternative baits investigated, Indian mackerel (Rastrelliger kanagurta) and artificial bait (lead lure), resulted in a lower overall catch efficiency and a shift in catch pattern towards smaller individuals. The two alternative baits had very similar overall catch efficiencies. The results obtained demonstrate that bait type and size affects both overall catch efficiency and size structure of narrow-barred Spanish mackerel caught in the Persian Gulf handline fishery. This implies that managing bait type and size might complement standard harvest regulations and facilitate changing exploitation pattern in the Persian Gulf handline fishery.

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