

Status of pelagic shoaling fishes sardines and anchovies from the Northern Arabian Sea, Pakistan

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Sardines and anchovies, pelagic shoaling fishes are found on the near surface area throughout the fishing grounds of Pakistan but chiefly in a 16 km strip of coastal waters and specially during breeding season in Sonmiani bay lagoon. These species feed upon plankton. They were caught with boat seines, gillnets, shore seines and cast nets. They were also caught in the trawl net owing to the shallowness of the habitat. It reveals that these fishes were also found in near shore shallow water at 10-12 meters depth in the Pakistani sea waters. Among several species, 25 species of sardines and anchovies were found commercially important in the study area catches. Sardines

were found dominant among 17 species in which *Hilsa kelee*, *Ilisha megaloptera* and *Escualosa thoracata* were abundant in most of the year whereas anchovies ranked second with 8 species among *Thryssa setirostris*, *Thryssa vitrirostris* and *Thryssa malabarica* were abundant. The major fluctuation of species was cause by salinity and temperature of the area, so the species diversity and catch sizes varied with the months and the biomass distribution of catch as well as species showed a seasonal pattern in Pakistani Sea waters.

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