

FISHES TAKEN BY HAND-LINE IN PHANG-NGA BAY, ANDAMAN SEA

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ABSTRACT

This paper reports on 50 species of fishes, representing 16 families, taken solely by hand-line on a trip in Phang-nga Bay off the Andaman coast of Thailand. Commercial and recreational angling is not widely practiced in Thailand but has great potential for further development.

INTRODUCTION

During 7-15 June, 1980, I participated in a study of bait fishes as part of the project "UNDP/FAO Pole-and-Line Tuna Fishing in Southern Thailand" (WONGRATANA, 1982) aboard the vessel "Pramong 3" (59.68 tonnes) of the Phuket Marine Fisheries Station, Department of Fisheries. On that cruise, the crew and biologists on board spent considerable time fishing with hand-line during their spare hours, catching a large variety of fishes. Here I report on the species caught and discuss the implications with respect to further development of recreational angling in Thailand.

Angling is one of the most popular, fascinating and spectacular of sports. Developing countries with suitable marine or freshwater environments have valuable opportunities to promote angling as recreation as well as for its economic benefits. Countries that have promoted angling include United Kingdom, U.S.A., Canada, West Germany, Australia, New Zealand, Japan, South Africa, Mauritius, most countries surrounding the Mediterranean Sea and South Korea. There are many famous angling clubs spread throughout these countries, both sea and freshwater. Clubs can be found even in universities, remote villages and on islands. Many of them conduct classes, have libraries, arrange meetings, parties, tournaments, keep records and may issue bulletins or periodicals. The members of fishing clubs vary greatly in age and come from all walks of life. Books or charts about gamefishes are publications popular among the general public.

In Thailand, angling is generally regarded as only a means to obtain fresh fish from natural waterways, swamps, paddy fields and coastlines for human consumption. Angling for sport is practiced only by a number of resident Europeans and a very small number of Thais who have taken up this 'Western' sport. This may be explained by the fact that many of us, especially the elder generations, regard the sport

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as sinful from a Buddhist point of view. For most Thais, it is also a time-consuming, lonesome and somewhat dull sport. Freshwater environments are mostly swamps, marshes, and muddy rivers, not particularly appealing places for recreation. They are worse when they contain poisonous or noxious insects and other small animals. Few attractive public places are properly conserved or managed for such enjoyment by the people. In many cases off-shore angling is a luxury available to few. But we still lack knowledge of fishing opportunities and proper encouragement, as no authority has assumed responsibility for this branch of sport. In my opinion, however, angling could become as popular as golf or tennis. To my knowledge the earliest scientific report on angling in Thailand was written by MOM CHAO VIPULYA (1923), entitled "Notes on rod fishing in Bangkok", which appeared in this journal.

At present, a few recently developed local angling places in Thailand can be found along the east coast of the Gulf of Thailand, e.g. Bang-saray, Patthaya and Sattahip and at Phuket in the Andaman Sea. In freshwater, the Department of Fisheries has taken the first action in the improvement of the ponds at Chatujag City Park of Bangkok in early 1981 for angling by the local people.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A knowledge of the numbers and kinds of fishes available is indispensable to any programme for exploring or developing a commercial or recreational fishery, and for furthering our knowledge of fishery resources as a basis for their conservation and management.

It is my hope that the list of marine fishes appended will serve as a preliminary guide and provide some idea about the species which are obtainable by hook in the Phuket area, and stimulate others to collect records of other species, including maximum sizes and weights. The fighting ability of each species is also noteworthy.

This list contains 50 species in 16 families. The areas of angling were at Ko Hong and nearby Ko Ka in the Phang-nga Bay, where the sea bed varies from sand and gravels to stones, rocks or boulders. Some small places were muddy.

As the fishes were caught at the locations of the tuna live-bait experiments, they therefore may in some ways be correlated with the quality and quantity of the live-bait species.

Usually, fishing was done in the evening until very late at night at a depth of 15-35 m. Many fishes of small and medium size were caught with ordinary barbed hooks and baits. No rods or poles were used; nylon drop-lines weighted about 1 m from the hook were thrown and allowed to rest on the bottom. A long piece of cuttlefish or fish meat was used as bait. I was told that the former is better than the latter due to its toughness and stronger smell.

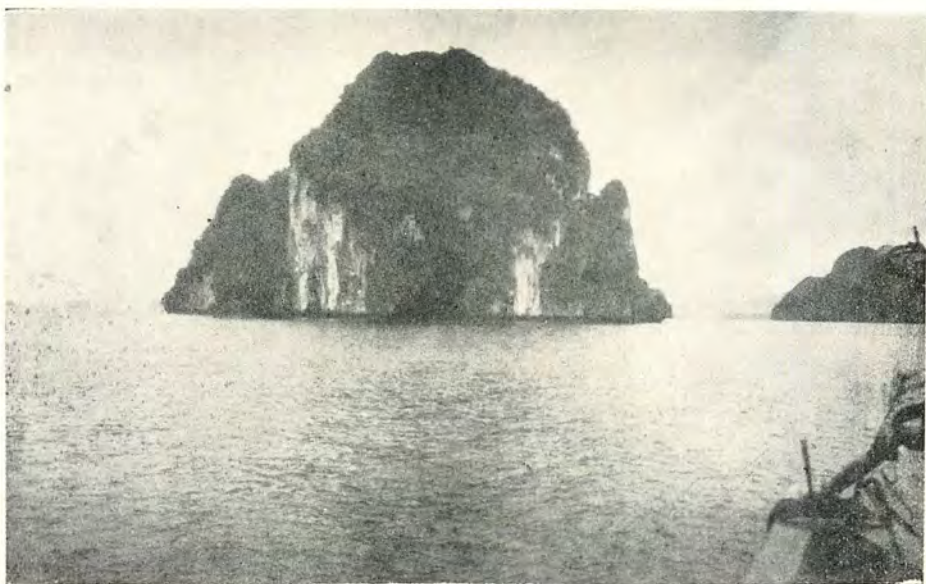


Figure 1. An angling location in the Phang-nga Bay, average depth about 35-40 m.



Figure 2. One of the small islands where hand-line fishing was carried out near shore at a depth of about 30 m.

Apart from the above methods of angling, on several occasions a series of 6-7 artificial baits (plumages) were used to catch *Megalaspis cordyla* when a group appeared near the surface of the water while chasing a school of silversides (atherinids) or anchovies (*Stolephorus*). The appearance of *M. cordyla* was noticed by the splashing of water and the sudden jumps of its prey and of the fish itself. Very early one morning, a large cuttlefish (*Sepioteutis lessoniana*) was caught on fish meat bait as it swam near to our research vessel and close to the water surface during a night light experiment.

During the day time most of the catches were perch-like fishes, e.g. members of Lutianidae, Serranidae and related families. At night time we caught mostly Carangidae. These were larger fishes and consisted of relatively fewer species. *Canangoides gymnostethus* of about 30-45 cm in length was particularly common. This species as well as *Pomadasyss hasta* is famous for its flavour when specially baked and served with home-made sauces from a local cuisine, and these species fetch good prices at local markets. The largest fish brought up on board was a specimen of *Alectis indica*, 56 cm SL (= standard length, measured from tip of snout to base of tail fin). Amongst an afternoon catch, a specimen of anchovy, *Stolephorus indicus*, 11.5 cm SL was secured. It represented the smallest fish of the eight-day catch. This reflects the carnivorous feeding habit of the day-caught fishes.

Study of the quality and quantity of the fishes captured revealed that angling and other related fishing methods are worthwhile and should be promoted. They could be encouraged as a part of the development of our small scale or artisanal fisheries. Their potential is great and they are very appropriate for a country with a fuel crisis. Furthermore, with angling and related fishing methods the sizes of the fish caught are larger and hence the fishing is less damaging to the population than it is with some other non-powered gears such as traps and beach seines.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This work could not be done without the generosity of the crew and biologists of the R.V. Pramong 3 of the Phuket Marine Fisheries Station of the Department of Fisheries, Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives. I thank them for the privilege of examining and making colour notes of their fishes. From them I also learned much about angling. I therefore would like to express my sincere appreciation to them, especially Mr. Jete Pimoljinda. Thanks are also due to Dr. Warren Brockelman for his critical reading of the manuscript.

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Appendix. A list of Andaman fishes taken from hand-lines at Ko Hong and Ko Ka in the Phang-nga Bay.

FAMILY SCYLLIORHINIDAE

1. *Chiloscyllium punctatum* Müller & Henle, 1841

FAMILY DASYATIDAE

2. *Dasyatis imbricatus* (Bloch & Schneider, 1801)
3. *D. kuhlii* (Müller & Henle, 1841)

FAMILY CHIROCENTRIDAE

4. *Chirocentrus dorab* (Forsskal, 1775)

FAMILY ENGRAULIDAE

5. *Stolephorus indicus* (van Hasselt, 1823)

FAMILY MURAENIDAE

6. *Gymnothorax boschi* (Bleeker, 1853)

FAMILY BELONIDAE

7. *Ablennes hians* (Valenciennes, 1846)

FAMILY SERRANIDAE

8. *Cephalophorus boenak* (Bloch, 1790)
9. *C. pachycentron* (Cuvier, 1828)
10. *Epinephelus areolatus* (Forsskal, 1775)
11. *E. bleekeri* (Vaillaint & Bocourt, 1877)
12. *E. fasciatus* (Forsskal, 1775)
13. *E. megachir* (Richardson, 1846)
14. *E. moara* (Schlegel, 1842)
15. *E. summana* (Forsskal, 1775)
16. *E. tauvina* (Forsskal, 1775)

FAMILY LUTIANIDAE

17. *Caesio caerulureus* Lacepède, 1802
18. *C. chrysozona* Cuvier, 1830
19. *C. erythrogaster* Cuvier, 1930
20. *Lutianus biguttatus* (Cuvier, 1830)
21. *L. johni* (Bloch, 1792)
22. *L. lineolatus* (Rüppell, 1828)
23. *L. russelli* (Bleeker, 1849)
24. *L. vaigiensis* (Quoy & Gaimard, 1824)
25. *L. vitta* (Quoy & Gaimard, 1824)
26. *Pinjalo pinjalo* (Bleeker, 1850)
27. *Pristipomoides typus* Bleeker, 1852

FAMILY LETHRINIDAE

28. *Lethrinus nebulosus* (Forsskål, 1775)
29. *L. ornatus* Valenciennes, 1830

FAMILY NEMIPTERIDAE

30. *Nemipterus hexodon* (Quoy & Gaimard, 1824)
31. *N. japonicus* (Bloch, 1791)
32. *N. peronii* (Valenciennes, 1830)
33. *Scolopsis dubiosus* Weber, 1913
34. *S. taeniopterus* (Valenciennes, 1830)
35. *S. vosmeri* (Bloch, 1792)

FAMILY POMADASYIDAE

36. *Pomadasya hasta* (Bloch, 1790)

FAMILY SCIAENIDAE

37. *Pennahia macrophthalmus* (Bleeker, 1850) (authors' *Pseudosciaena aneus*)

FAMILY THERAPONIDAE

38. *Therapon theraps* Cuvier, 1829

FAMILY PEMIPHERIDAE

39. *Pempheris moluca* Cuvier, 1831

FAMILY SCATOPHAGIDAE

40. *Scatophagus argus* (Linnaeus, 1766)

FAMILY CARANGIDAE

41. *Alectis indica* (Rüppell, 1828)
 42. *Atule mate* (Valenciennes, 1833)
 43. *Carangoides gymnostethus* Valenciennes, 1833
 44. *Caranx ignobilis* (Forsskål, 1775)
 45. *C. sexfasciatus* Quoy & Gaimard, 1824
 46. *Megalaspis cordyla* (Linnaeus, 1758)
 47. *Selar boops* (Valenciennes, 1833)
 48. *S. crumenophthalmus* (Bloch, 1793)
 49. *Selaroides leptolepis* (Valenciennes, 1833)
 50. *Ulua mentalis* Ehrenberg in Valenciennes, 1833 (authors' *U. mandibularis*)
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