



Fishery Characteristics and Population Dynamics of Indian White Shrimp, *Fenneropenaeus indicus* from Arabian Sea, Sultanate of Oman

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Abstract

Monthly carapace length frequency data of Indian white shrimp *Fenneropenaeus indicus* were collected from commercial cast net catch from the Omani waters of the Arabian Sea at Al-Mahout fishing area. Sampling covered the first three months of the shrimp fishing season from September to November during two years 2010 and 2011, where more than 95% of shrimp catch was landed. FiSAT software program was used to analyze its length frequency distribution. The size structure of *F. indicus* is characterized by sexual dimorphism, where females are significantly larger than males. Allover sex ratio was slightly in favor of females with an overall sex ratio 1:1.1 in 2010 and 1:1.28 in 2011. Growth parameters (K and L_{∞}) were estimated based on age-length data obtained from Bhattacharya method (1967). Also, the instantaneous rate of total mortality (Z), natural mortality (M) and fishing mortality (F) were estimated and accordingly the exploitation ratio was determined as F/Z. Per-recruit analysis showed an overfishing situation for *F. indicus* in Oman and the present level of exploitation rate should be reduced by about 12% to achieve the maximum yield per recruit and by about 50% to maintain a sufficient spawning biomass. To overcome any bias in our estimations, we suggest a gradual decrease in fishing effort starting by 10% and make year-to-year analysis to adjust computations of fishing mortality and age at first capture.

Keywords: Indian white shrimp; *Fenneropenaeus indicus*; Arabian Sea; population dynamics; management.

Introduction

Crustaceans, such as penaeid shrimp, crabs and clawed and spiny lobsters have become very important of world annual fishery production due to high demand for them in world markets. Shrimps are regarded as the most consumed fishery products in most developed countries. The demand and high foreign exchange earnings have driven exploitation of most shrimp stocks to unhealthy levels. The world's production of shrimp is about 6 million ton of which approximately 3.4 million ton is contributed by capture fisheries and 2.4 tons by aquaculture (FAO, 2000). Among the shrimp, the contribution of *Fenneropenaeus indicus* to global fisheries was around 2.4% (FAO, 2008). The species *F. indicus* is one of the major commercial penaeid species of the world. It is found in the Indo-West Pacific from East and Southeast Africa, through Malaysia and Indonesia to South China and Northern Australia. It is a marine shrimp (with estuarine juveniles) which likes mud or sandy mud at depths of 2 to 90 m.

The penaeid shrimp fishery is one of the most important fishery resources in Oman. The penaeid

shrimp catch is composed of a number of species of which the Indian white shrimp *Fenneropenaeus indicus* is the most abundant one along with *P. semisulcatus*. Shrimps are greatly contributed to the Oman economy where 854 tons were landed in 2010 from which 790 tons were exported forming more than 2 million Omani Rial (OR = 2.6 USD).

Although the penaeid shrimp fishery has a great economical importance in Oman, very few studies of these species are available (Siddeek *et al.*, 1989, 2001). On the other hand, a number of studies concerning biology and fishery of penaeid shrimps were undertaken in different water bodies around the world (Chavez, 1973; White, 1975; Garcia and Le Reste, 1981; Jayakody and Costa, 1988; Dall *et al.*, 1990; Xucai and Mohammed, 1996; Mehanna, 1993, 2000, 2003; Jayawardane *et al.*, 2002; Cha *et al.*, 2004; Lopez-Martinez *et al.*, 2005; Mehanna and Khalifa, 2007; Mehanna and El-Gammal, 2008). The present work was to evaluate the shrimp fishery at Al-Mahout fishing area, as well as determination of population parameters required for its sustainable management in the Omani waters of Arabian Sea.

Material and Methods

Fishing Area

Al-Wusta Province is the first in shrimp production in Oman where about 96% of shrimp catch of Oman comes from it. There are a number of landing sites along Al-Wusta Province from which Al-Mahout is the most productive one. Al-Mahout (Figure 1), one of the main landing sites along the Arabian Sea coast of Oman.

Sampling

Length frequency data of *F. indicus* were collected from the commercial catch of the cast net fishery in Mahout area (Al-Khalouf landing site). Sampling procedure covered three months from September to November during two fishing seasons 2010 and 2011. It is worth mentioning that the shrimp fishery in Oman is seasonal starting at September and extending to the end of April. Nearly the whole shrimp catch was landed during the first three months with a very little proportion landed during December (Fishery statistics book, 2010). After sex-wise sorting out, the carapace length (straight length from posterior margin of the orbit to the median dorsal posterior edge of the carapace) to the nearest mm was measured by caliper for 1200 *F. indicus* in 2010 and 800 ones in 2011 and then the monthly carapace length frequencies for the two years were grouped into 2 mm classes for modal progression analysis (MPA).

Methods

For each sex the length frequency was resolved into normally distributed cohort components using

Bhattacharya (1967) method and the results were used as input to Ford (1933) – Walford (1946) plot to estimate the asymptotic carapace length (CL_{∞} , in mm) and the rate at which the asymptotic length is attained (K , in y^{-1}). The growth parameters were also estimated using the ELEFAN I program. Initial values for L_{∞} were obtained using the Powell-Wetherall method (Powell, 1979; Wetherall *et al.*, 1987). Total mortality (Z) was estimated using the cumulated catch curve (Jones and van Zalinge, 1981) this method is based on the existence of a linear relationship (over at least the central part of its range) between the natural logarithms of the cumulated frequency and the natural logarithms of ($L_{\infty} - L$). This relationship is expressed as: $\ln(CN) = a + (Z/K) \ln(L_{\infty} - L)$, Where $\ln(CN)$ is the natural logarithm of cumulated frequency, Z is the total mortality coefficient and K is the growth coefficient. Natural mortality (M) was calculated using the Pauly's (1980) formula using SST (annual mean sea surface temperature) equal 26°C (McIlwain *et al.*, 2006). The fishing mortality (F) was computed as $F = Z - M$ and the exploitation rate was computed from the rate F/Z (Gulland, 1971). The length at first capture (L_c) was estimated by the analysis of catch curve using the method of Pauly (1984).

Growth performance index (ϕ') for *F. indicus* was computed based on the length data using the following equation (Pauly and Munro 1984): $\phi' = \log K + 2 \log L_{\infty}$

The relative yield per recruit (Y'/R) and relative biomass per recruit (B'/R) were estimated by using the model of Beverton and Holt (1966) as modified by Pauly and Soriano (1986). The relative yield per recruit (Y'/R) model was used because it can provide the kind of information needed for management (Sparre and Venema, 1998). The following reference points were used to determine the status of *F. indicus*

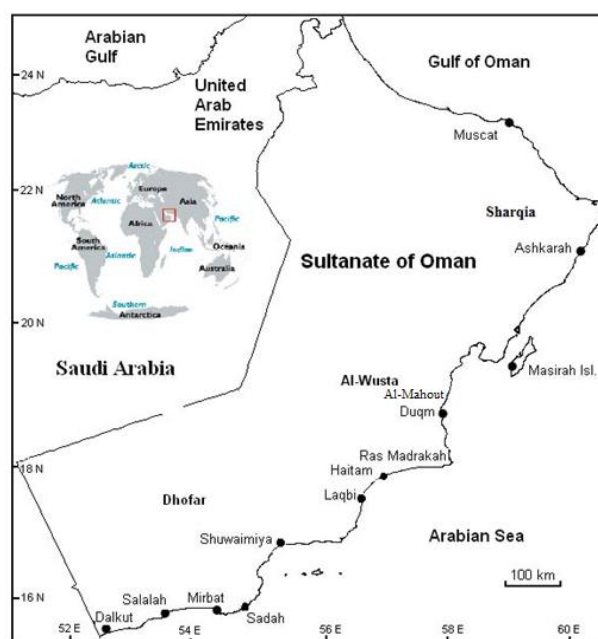


Figure 1. Main landing sites along the Omani coast of Arabian Sea.

stock in the Arabian sea: $E_{0.1}$ (the exploitation level at which the marginal increase in yield per recruit reaches 1/10 of the marginal increase computed at a very low value of E), $E_{0.5}$ (the exploitation level which will result in a reduction of the unexploited biomass by 50%) and E_{max} (the exploitation level that produces the maximum yield per recruit).

Results and Discussion

Length Frequency Distribution

The carapace length frequency distribution for September, October and November combined of *F. indicus* during 2010 and 2011 is shown in Figure 2. In both 2010 and 2011, the largest percentage of males *F. indicus* (86%) is within the length classes of 27–37 mm CL and that of females is within the range 28–42 mm CL in 2010 (80%) and within the range 29–45 mm CL in 2011 (71%). The observed maximum length was 53 mm CL for males and 64 mm CL for females, while the observed minimum one was 18 mm CL for males and 22 mm CL for females. The size structure of *F. indicus* population in the Arabian Sea showed sexual dimorphism, where females are significantly larger than males.

Sex Ratio

The sex composition of *F. indicus* in commercial catches from Arabian sea varied significantly from month to month and from year to year. In 2010, male:female ratio was 1:1.06 in September, 1:0.74 in

October and 1:1.49 in November, while in 2011, it was 1:1.09 in September, 1:1.75 in October and 1:2.54 in November. The overall sex ratio in the samples was 1:1.1 in 2010 and 1:1.28 in 2011 males to females which indicates the predominance of females in the commercial shrimp catch.

Population Parameters

Longevity and Growth in Length

The results obtained indicated that the maximum life span of males is 12 months while that of females is 18 months. Both males and females attain their highest rate of increase in length during the first three months of life after which a gradual decrease in growth increment was noticed with further increase in age. It was also apparent that females have a slightly higher growth rate than males (Figure 3). The results dealing with the life span of *F. indicus* show agreement with the fact that penaeid shrimp are characterized by a short life span in the order of two years (Garcia and Le Reste, 1981). The results also agree with the findings of Thomas (1975); Garcia and Van Zalinge (1982); Tom *et al.* (1984); Dredge (1990); Somers and Kirkwood (1991); Mehanna (1993, 2000 and 2003); Mehanna and Khalifa (2007); Mehanna and El-Gammal (2008).

Growth Parameters

The mean lengths for cohorts estimated by the Bhattacharya method for males and females were

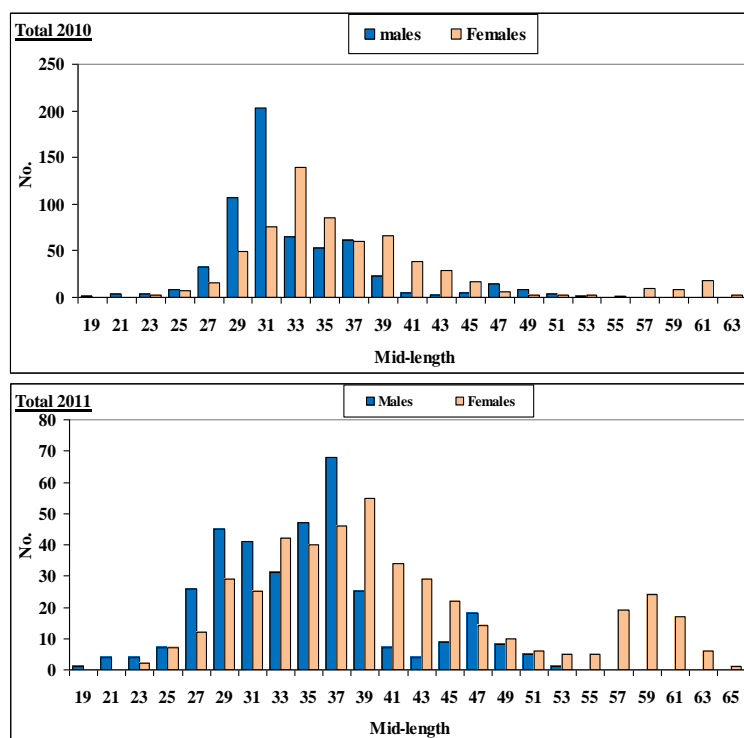


Figure 2. Carapace length frequency distribution for the three months combined for *F. indicus* in the Arabian Sea, Oman during 2010 and 2011.

fitted into Ford-Walford plot to estimate the growth parameters. The obtained values of K were 2.11 and 1.69 y^{-1} for males and females respectively, while $CL_{\infty} = 57.11$ and 68.56 mm carapace length for males and females respectively. Table 1 shows the growth parameters estimates obtained from ELEFAN I program and Wetherall method. The value of K for males is higher than that for females indicating the faster decrease in growth rates of males than females. The rapid growth of this species implied by high K - values agrees with the fact that the short-lived animals like shrimp reach their asymptotic length in a year or

two and are characterized by a high K-value (Beverton and Holt, 1957 and Garcia and Le Reste, 1981). Also, the values obtained were consistent with those reported in other studies for related species (Table 2) and are within the reported range for other penaeids (D'Incao and Fonseca, 2000).

Growth Performance Index (ϕ)

The estimated values for the growth performance index (ϕ) of *F. indicus* during the present investigation were 3.84 for males and 3.9 for females

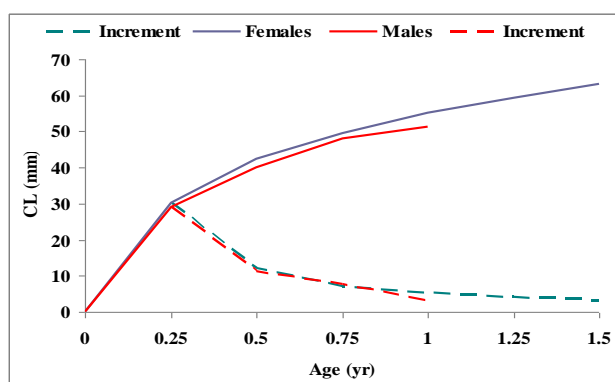


Figure 3. Length by age and growth increment of *F. indicus* in the Arabian Sea, Oman

Table 1. Growth parameters of *F. indicus* from the Arabian Sea of Oman obtained from different methods

Method	Males		Females		Sexes combined	
	K	CL_{∞}	K	CL_{∞}	K	CL_{∞}
Bhattacharya and Ford- Walford	2.11	57.11	1.69	68.56	1.73	68.33
ELEFAN I program	2.21	57.80	1.78	68.10	1.80	67.91
Wetherall and Bertalanffy plot	2.29	56.21	1.83	67.98	1.85	67.93

Table 2. Summary of the growth parameters (L_{∞} and K), natural mortality (M) and longevity available for some penaeid shrimp in different localities

Species	CL_{∞}		K		M		Life span (month)	Locality	Author
	♂♂	♀♀	♂♂	♀♀	♂♂	♀♀			
<i>Penaeus indicus</i>			1.20	1.00	2.20	1.94	12	Manila Bay	Agasenand DelMundo, 1988
<i>Penaeus indicus</i>		56**		1.8		3.04	24	Srilanka	Jayakody and Costa, 1988
<i>Penaeus stylifera</i>			1.19	1.05	2.60	2.30		India	Suseelan and Rajan, 1988
<i>Penaeus merguensis</i>			1.31	1.05	3.7	3.1		Indonesia	Sumiono, 1988
<i>Penaeus longistylus</i>			2.05	1.12		3.72	12	Australia	Dredge, 1990
<i>Penaeus semisulcatus</i>	38.1	62.2	1.3	3.2			18 - 24	Australia	Somers and Kirkwood, 1991
<i>Penaeus japonicus</i>			1.82	1.65	2.73	2.44	15 - 18	Red Sea, Egypt	Mehanna, 199
<i>Penaeus indicus</i>	200*	230*	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.0	12	India	Rao et al., 1993
<i>Penaeus semisulcatus</i>			1.77	1.56	2.52	2.40	15 - 18	Red Sea, Egypt	Mehanna, 2000
<i>Penaeus indicus</i>	192*	199*	1.51	1.87	1.73	1.73		Srilanka	Jayawardane et al., 2002
<i>Penaeus latisulcatus</i>			1.91	1.70	2.74	2.45	12 - 15	Red Sea, Egypt	Mehanna, 2003
<i>Metapenaeus joyneri</i>	29	34.7	1.02	1.22					Cha et al., 2004
<i>Litopenaeus stylirostris</i>			2.28	1.92			15 - 20	California Gulf	Lopez-Martinez et al., 2005
<i>P. semisulcatus</i>	38	50.4	1.6	2.2	2.11	2.41	15 - 20	Iran	Niamaimandi et al., 2007
<i>Metapenaeus stebbingi</i>			2.63	2.16	3.73	3.16	9 - 12	Lake Timsah, Egypt	Mehanna and El-Gammal, 2007
<i>Penaeus indicus</i>	57.1	68.6	2.11	1.69	2.35	1.93	12 - 18	Oman	Present study

* Total length ** sex not given

which were higher than those reported in the literature (2-3.1: Devi, 1986; Agasen and Del Mundo, 1988; Rao *et al.*, 1993; Jayawardane *et al.*, 2002). It is obvious that females have a slightly higher growth rate than males of this species and this species has a higher growth rate in Omani waters than other places.

Mortality and Exploitation Rate

The results (Figure 4) indicated that the total mortality coefficient differs between the two sexes ($Z = 6.81 \text{ yr}^{-1}$ for males and 5.38 yr^{-1} for females). Sparre (1990) pointed out that for small short-lived species which exposed to strong fluctuations in growth due to changing environmental conditions, the length based methods show an over estimation for Z . With the shortage of data available and the difficulties facing the direct methods of mortality estimation, these methods are widely used (eg. Jones and van Zalinge, 1981; Devi, 1986; Jayakody and Costa, 1988; Agasen and del Mundo, 1988; Sumiono, 1988; Dredge, 1990; Villarta *et al.*, 2006; Nwosu, 2009). Also, these high values of Z are acceptable, because most of penaeid fisheries around the world have high fishing mortalities and thus show high Z values (Garcia and Le Reste, 1981; Garcia, 1984, 1985). According to the previous Z -estimations for penaeid shrimp, the present Z -values appear to lie in an acceptable range.

The values of M obtained were 2.35 and 1.93 yr^{-1} for males and females respectively. Beverton and Holt (1959) found that the fast growing species have high K - values with high natural mortalities (Table 2). The values of fishing mortality rate F were 4.46 yr^{-1} for males and 3.45 yr^{-1} for females while the exploitation rate was estimated as 0.65 for males and 0.64 for females. Gulland (1971) suggested that the optimum exploitation rate for any exploited stock is about 0.5 at $F_{\text{opt}} = M$. More recent, Pauly (1987) proposed a lower optimum F that equal to $0.4 M$. In the present study, F was higher than the values of F_{opt} given by Gulland and Pauly indicating a high level of exploitation of the *F. indicus* stock in the Oman coast of Arabian Sea.

Length at First Capture

The lengths at first capture (the length at which 50% of the fish are vulnerable to capture) were estimated as $L_{50\%} = 22$ and 23.4 mm CL for males and females, respectively (Figure 5).

Per-Recruit Analysis and Reference Points

The use of yield-per-recruit models may be particularly restrictive for fast growing tropical species with high rates of natural mortality because

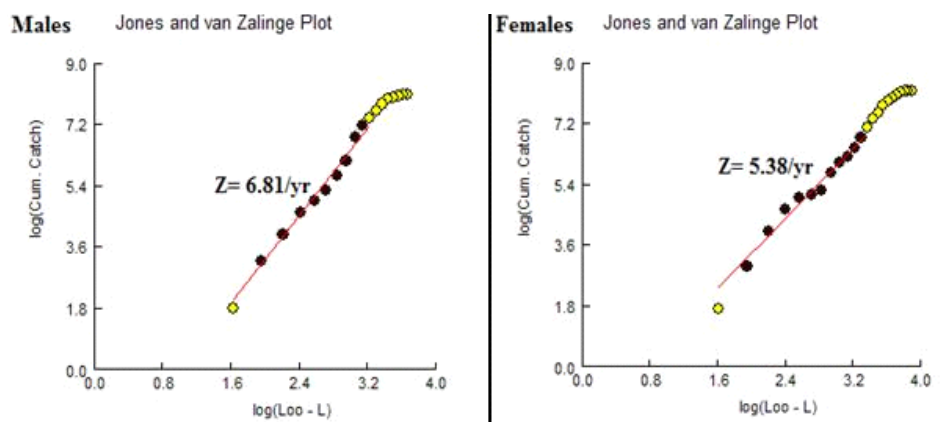


Figure 4. Length converted catch curve of *F. indicus* in the Arabian Sea, Oman.

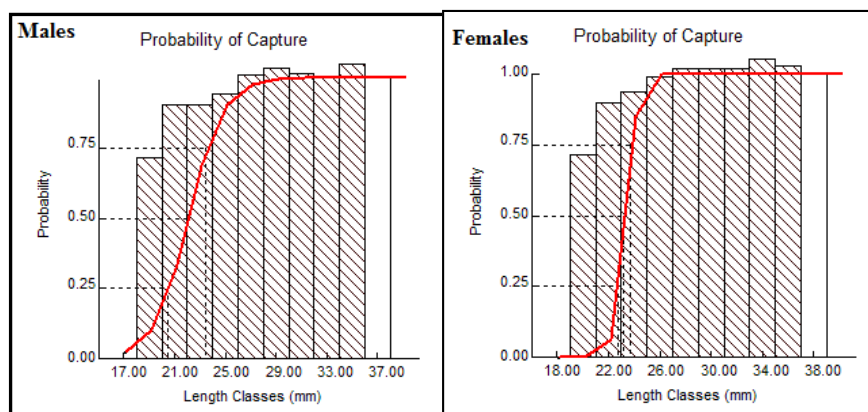


Figure 5. Probability of capture of *F. indicus* in the Arabian Sea, Oman.

the curves may not reach a maximum within a reasonable range of fishing mortality values (Gayaniilo and Pauly 1997).

The plot of relative yield per recruit (Y/R) and biomass per recruit (B/R) against exploitation rate (E) for males and females *F. indicus* (Figure 6) showed that the maximum (Y/R) was obtained at nearly the same value of E ($E_{MSY} = 0.57$ for males and 0.54 for females). Both of $E_{0.1}$ and $E_{0.5}$ were estimated and the obtained values were 0.45 and 0.33 for males and 0.46 and 0.32 for females, respectively. The estimates of both values were lower than the current E which is also higher than that gives the maximum Y/R. For resource management purposes, it is suggested that the exploitation rate should be reduced to the conservative ones ($E_{0.1}$ or $E_{0.5}$). Accordingly, the fishing mortality should be reduced by about 30-52% of its current value.

Stock Status and Recommendations

The present study indicated that the Indian white shrimp exploited by the cast nets in the Oman coast of the Arabian Sea is overexploited, as the cast nets exploit under sized shrimps of *F. indicus* in varying proportions. This situation may also due to the illegal fishing practices and illegal fishing in the closure season, or also in the nursery areas.

The current measurements; closed season for four months each year and prohibition of trawls have been insufficient to conserve the shrimp fishery in Oman. Therefore, complementary measures are required such as reduce the fishing effort, this could be applied gradually starting by 10% decreasing reaching to 40% of its current value, protect the spawning and nursery grounds through the implementation of marine protected areas MPA to reduce the natural mortality, improve the national statistics on catch and fishing effort and increase the scientific efforts to make year-to-year analysis to adjust computations of fishing mortality and age at first capture based on the gradual decreasing scenario of fishing effort. Also, it is advisable to introduce an

appropriate mesh regulation for cast nets with a view of increasing the mean size of the shrimps exploited, which would also be favorable from an economic point of view.

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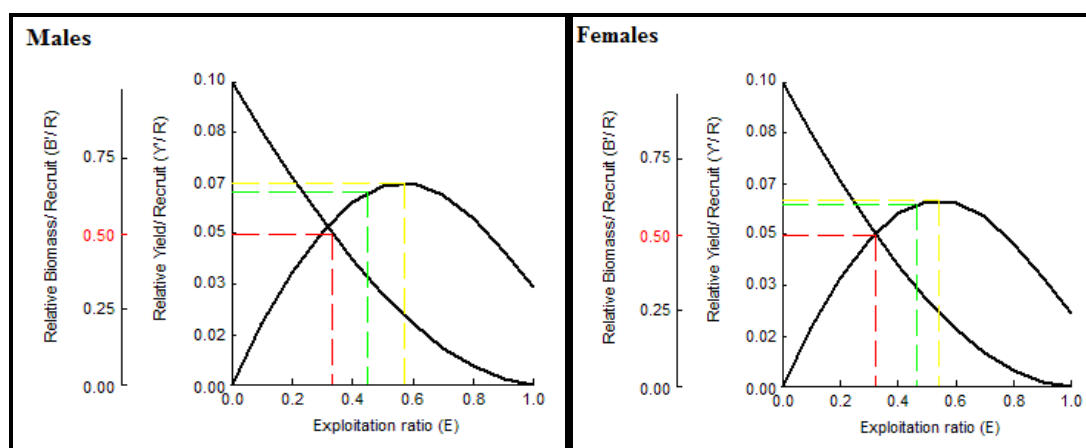


Figure 6. Per-recruit analysis of *F. indicus* in the Arabian Sea, Oman

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