

Study on crab trap targeting blue swimming crab around Pak Nam Pran coastal, Prachuap Khiri Khan province

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Abstract

Blue swimming crab (BSC), *Portunus pelagicus* is an economic important species and recorded as the highest catch among the crabs. Collapsible trap is the one of popular fishing gear for catching the crab. The collapsible function is useful for minimum the space onboard to carry. Hence, even small fishing boat can carry a lot of traps. The trap structure made from steel (3-6 mm diameter), size of 30x50x15 cm, wrapped by polyethylene net with the mesh size of 38 mm. The bait (cheap marine fish) attached inside at the center of trap bottom. The trap was set at the seafloor. This study was conducted around Pak Nam Pran coastal, Prachuap Khiri Khan province by interview and onboard survey with the fishers on 30 Sep-1 Oct 2017. The data were recorded such as trap deploying, retrieving, the catch, post-harvest process etc. The study found that 6 sets (100 pots/set) were deployed as a long-line, 12 m interval, 2 m of branch-line. The fishing ground was far from shore 1-10 km, 3-6 m depth. The soak time was about 12 hours. The fishing boat was 6-8 m length, long tail with the outboard engine. The average catch of BSC was about 10 kg/operation day. The fishers get the good catch in Jun-Jul. The catch results showed that not only BSC was caught but also the bycatch animals such as grouper (*Epinephelus* sp.), eeltail catfish (Plotosidae), Three-spined frogfish (*Batrachoididae* sp.), spotted Babylon (*Babylonia* sp.) and crucifix crab (*Charybdis feriata*). Some of them were non/low marketable value which the fishers did not sale. The bycatch were discarded/released at sea while some edible bycatch were brought back home for cooking. The fishers formed a group and established a project aims to utilize the BSC resources for tourism, marketing, processing and distribution together with the idea of conservation in the same time. Some income/benefit from the project would be returned to the group members while some would be used for running the project. The crab bank project aim to sustainable crab use in the study area will be discussed.