



Socio-economic aspects of bivalve collectors and consumers in Kalpitiya Lagoon of Sri Lanka

Balasinghe B.H.M.^{1*}, Wijesinghe R.D.N.¹, Iroshanie R.G.A.² and Radampola K.¹

¹*Department of Fisheries and Aquaculture, Faculty of Fisheries and Marine Sciences & Technology, University of Ruhuna*

²*Department of Oceanography and Marine Geology, Faculty of Fisheries and Marine Sciences & Technology, University of Ruhuna*

*Email: madubashahasantha@gmail.com

Abstract

Bivalves are highly nutritious food commodities which are abundant in Kalpitiya lagoon, Sri Lanka. The present study aimed to collect information on the socio-economic aspects, attitudes, and perceptions of both bivalve collectors and consumers in the Kalpitiya lagoon area from August to October 2023 period. Information on demographic characters, attitudes & perceptions, was collected through semi structured questionnaires from thirty bivalve collectors and forty-nine bivalve consumers. Results revealed that the majority of the bivalve collectors belonged to the age class 50-60 years (30%) and children under the age of 10 (6.67%) were also involved in bivalve collection activities with their parents. Both males (53.33%) and females (46.67%) involved in bivalve collection. A higher bivalve collection was observed during the months of April to October. The majority (43.33%) of bivalve collectors spent nearly 2 hours collecting bivalves. Hand picking, foot method, diving and utilization of instruments were common to collect the bivalves. Majority of the collectors (33.33%) had an average daily income between 1000-2000 LKR. Majority of the consumers bought bivalves at the harvesting site from collectors (43.59%), and 30.61% of the bivalve consumers preferred to spend around 1000-2000 LKR to buy bivalves. In Kalpitiya Lagoon, the observed edible varieties of bivalves were cockles, mussels, oysters, and clams. The reasons cited for non-consumption included, unpleasant flavor (22.22%), unpleasant appearance and fear of food poisoning (18.52%), high price (14.81%), causing allergies (11.11%), previous food poisoning and other reasons (7.41%). Reasons for the bivalve consumption were low price (29.81%), taste (25%), nutritional value (19.23%), easy availability (18.27%), and no definitive reason (7.69%). Bivalve consumer attitudes and preferences towards different bivalve species differed considerably according to their demographic and socio-economic status.

Keywords

Hand picking, foot method, diving, bivalve consumption