

## **Project Update: April 2015**

Funding for the project was activated in December 2013. A reconnaissance survey was conducted to identify field sites and four field sites were identified for sampling; Okha and Rupen in Devbhoomi Dwarka district and Veraval and Sutrapada in Gir-somnath district. Field bases were set up at Okha and Veraval. Due to unforeseen logistical delays, sampling was delayed by 2 months. Several attempts were made to sample at Veraval and Sutrapada through established contacts and local fisheries unions but the sensitive nature of the study and suspicion of fisher communities towards researchers made sampling highly risky in these locations. After working out field logistics, sampling commenced in March 2014 and continued till January 2015 in Okha and Rupen. A total of 107 trawlers and 60 gillnets were sampled during the study period.



*Left: Trawlers at the fishing jetty in Okha. Right: Gillnet boats on the beach in Rupen*

The objectives of the study were to build a database of fish breeding cycles to better understand when fishing activities need to be regulated and to understand social and economic drivers of non-compliance. A database of fish breeding cycles is being compiled using reports, theses and papers available online and procured from libraries of fisheries research institutes in the study area. Key informant surveys were conducted to understand social and economic drivers of non-compliance. Interviews were also conducted with fisheries and forest department staff to understand drivers of non-compliance. Interviews with fishers were not possible to the extent proposed as fishers were unwilling to give their consent to participate in the study.

Fish catch monitoring revealed important differences in fish catch from different gear types with variations in proportion on juveniles caught, catch value and target species. Different fishing communities showed varying outlooks towards fisheries regulations and fisheries sustainability. Due to high hostility and suspicion of fishing communities towards the study, dedicated outreach programmes were not conducted. However, importance of regulating fisheries and fisheries sustainability were communicated constantly during interactions with fishers over the course of the study.



*Juvenile sardine caught using scoop nets*



*Ribbonfish caught using trawl nets*

Data from fish catch monitoring and interview surveys is being analysed and will be completed by May 2015.