

ABSTRACT

There are five species of clams in the Negombo Estuary of which *Meritrix casta* is the dominant species. Clams are distributed in association with sea grass beds. The size of *M. casta* in the estuary ranged from 3 - 45 mm. Females and males reached maturity when they are about 24 mm and 27 mm, respectively. They feed on plankton specially on diatom. The total biomass of *M. casta* in Negombo Estuary is about 10500 mt of which only about 236 mt are harvested each year. There is only one population of *M. casta* in the estuary. Protection of sea grass beds and prevention of estuarine pollution sustains *M. casta* in Negombo Estuary.

About 30 Fishermen make a living by fishing for clams during south west monsoon, when some old fishermen find it difficult to fish in the rough sea. There are two spawning seasons of *M. casta* in the estuary.