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**GUIDE TO IDENTIFY MARINE FOOD FISHES AVAILABLE
AT SOME SELECTED MARKETS / LANDING SITES
IN SOUTH WESTERN AND SOUTHERN COASTS
OF SRI LANKA**

A PROJECT REPORT PRESENTED BY

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With the implementation of “new educational reforms” the subject Biology was introduced to the G.C.E.A/L curriculum in 1998 integrating Zoology and Botany which were two independent subjects in the old system. In this new Biology syllabus aquaculture was a sub-unit under the unit number eight on applied biology. Identification of common marine food fishes was laid down as one of the practical activity of the aquaculture sub-unit. However, a picture guide required for this activity was not included, in the teacher guide provided by the National Institute of Education. This study was carried out with the aim of preparing a picture guide of marine food fishes available in the local market. The present study was carried during December 2003 to April 2004 in selected fish landing sites and fish markets along the coastal belt from Beruwala to Matara. Most common marine food fishes available along this coastal belt during this season were identified. Identification sheets were prepared with the aid of hand drawn sketches and special morphological characteristics of each fish species. Meantime a questionnaire was distributed among thirty A/L Biology teachers. It was found that introducing biology as a subject to the A/L curriculum created many problems to teachers, especially with field activities related to the aquaculture sub-unit. Lack of a picture guide for the identification of marine food fishes was identified as one of the major difficulties faced by A/L biology teachers with reference to the aquaculture sub-unit in the biology syllabus. Majority of teachers suggested that workshops and seminars should be conducted for the aquaculture subunit, as well as provide pictorial guides and model identification keys to overcome problems that they faced. Nearly 80% of food fishes in the coastal belt from Beruwala to Matara was available throughout the year and about 20% of species were seasonally available. This pictorial guide can be used as a resource to identify marine food fishes available in the local market for A/L students as well as teachers. Through this guide student will get a clear understanding of morphological characteristics that are used in the identification of fish species.