

## Fishing Technology

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Shri Lanka's offshore fishery has been growing considerably in the last few years. About 400 small decked boats of 9-11 m now venture out as far as 200 n miles from Shri Lanka's shores and stay at sea for up to ten days in search of tuna, shark and billfish.

The expansion of this fishery in Shri Lanka was, in many ways, hurriedly done, without the required upgrading of boat technology for boat crew and safety. The result has been a relatively high accident rate. Every year, an average of eight boats and around 30 men are lost at sea without trace.

A Bay of Bengal Programme (BOBP) subproject in Shri Lanka studied this problem and offered advice on safety at sea for the offshore fisheries. It recommended that information should be provided to boatyards, boat-owners and crew on the design and operational aspects which contribute to making a safer fishing boat, with adequate protection for the lives of those aboard. This manual was developed to assist in this effort.

The manual covers aspects of safety that are relevant to all decked fishing boats less than 12 m length, but it deals more in detail with the engine installation, since experience in Shri Lanka has shown that engine breakdown, which leads to drifting, is a major cause of fishing craft being lost. The manual indicates practical solutions to safety problems faced by multiday offshore boats off Shri Lanka and elsewhere.

As this safety guide is intended to be of practical use to boatbuilders, boat-owners and fishermen, it has been necessary to be specific and go into detail. It will also be very useful to teachers in fisheries training schools and extension field staff dealing with small-scale offshore fisheries.

The Bay of Bengal Programme (BOBP) is a multiagency regional fisheries programme which covers seven countries around the Bay of Bengal - Bangladesh, India, Indonesia, Malaysia, Maldives, Shri Lanka and Thailand. The Programme plays a catalytic and consultative role: it develops, demonstrates and promotes new technologies, methodologies and ideas to help improve the conditions of small-scale fisherfolk communities in member countries. The BOBP is sponsored by the governments of Denmark, Sweden and the United Kingdom, and also by UNDP (United Nations Development Programme). The main executing agency is the FAO (Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations).

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