

## PART ONE

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## RECENT TRENDS IN THE INLAND FISHERY OF SRI LANKA

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### 1. INTRODUCTION

The inland fishery of Sri Lanka, which is almost entirely based on its reservoir systems, is considered to be one of the most productive in the world. The total fish yield from the larger reservoirs is 27,000-30,000 mt/yr, which is equivalent to over 300 kg/ha/yr (De Silva, 1988a). When compared to the average annual yield of 80 kg/ha of lake and reservoir fisheries in lowland areas of tropical developing countries (Oglesby, 1985), the mean production from the Sri Lankan reservoir fishery is very high. The inland fishery of Sri Lanka at present accounts for about 20 per cent of the country's total fish production (De Silva, 1988a).

The extant reservoirs in Sri Lanka consist of the ancient reservoirs that have been restored or rehabilitated, and the new reservoirs. The total surface area of these reservoirs at full supply level is about 175,000 ha (Fernando and De Silva, 1984) which gives a value of approximately 2.7 ha of water surface for every sq km of land. By the end of this century, with the prospects for the construction of new reservoirs, the total area of reservoirs will be over 250,000 ha, giving four ha per sq km of standing water for the country as a whole (Fernando, 1991). Due to the extensive availability of inland water resources in Sri Lanka, there is considerable potential for the development of inland fishery in the country. This is particularly important because the reservoir fishery in Sri Lanka is a cheap source of high-quality animal protein for rural communities.

This paper reviews recent trends in the inland fishery of Sri Lanka and attempts to identify future strategies for its development.