Stock Status and some Biological Aspects of *Lethrinus lentjan* (Lacapede, 1802), in South Coast Kenya

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The Pinkear Emperor (*Lethrinus lentjan*) is among the three demersal species dominating fish catches in the artisanal fishery along the Kenya coast. Available data indicate total landings of *L. lentjan* have declined over the past decade due to over-exploited evidenced by increasing fishing effort. However, little information is available on its biology. This study therefore aimed at assessing its stock status and some biological aspects including length-weight relationship, condition and reproduction. Samples were measured for their length (cm) and weight (g) at Msambweni, Shimoni, Majoreni and Vanga fish landing sites from September 2016 to February 2017. Some fish were purchased for dissection to determine sex and gonad status in the laboratory. Mortality, exploitation rate, length-weight relationship, condition factor, fecundity and size at first maturity were determined using standard methods. Results indicated that *L. lentjan* was being exploited at an exploitation rate of 0.547 and had an L50 of 13.63 cm. Growth was allometric as the length exponent of 2.98 was significantly less than 3. Mean fecundity was 8957.3 (± 9841SE) while gonadosomatic index was highest in January suggesting it was the peak spawning period. The study provides critical baseline scientific data on *L. lentjan* useful in formulating strategies for the sustainable management of its fishery in south coast of Kenya. There is need for restriction on use of destructive fishing gear to reduce pressure on the fishery.