



Some of the winners showing off their catch.

# Bonanza off Semporna

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SEMPORNA: Two artificial reefs produced these huge tunas at a recent contest here.

Two artificial reefs made of coconut leaves were contributed by UMS in waters off the State's east coast district.

Thanks to the reefs, locally known as *payao*, Abdul Shukor Danabal reeled in a whopping 85kg tuna and was adjudged King of Anglers at the April 11 event.

He also took home a RM1,000 cash prize, a trophy and a hamper while Abdul Asamli won the multiple fish category by catching two tuna fish that tipped the scales at 95kg.

Vice-Chancellor Datuk Seri Dr Kamaruzaman Ampon said UMS was trying to help fishermen in the State earn a better livelihood.

He said the university was actively pursuing research in seaweed aquaculture, rearing of fish in cages besides education for the fishermen's children.

The reefs, suspended 30m from the surface and anchored 2,700m deep into the Sulawesi Sea with concrete blocks, act as a feeding ground for the tuna and other species.

The reefs, costing RM5,000 each, were installed last November following efforts by the UMS chapter of the Malaysian Universities Voluntary Council (Maskum).

Three months after that, fishermen were landing up to 300kg of tuna daily.

Previously, they had to venture closer to the Philippine or Indonesia sea borders as there was hardly any catch in waters close to Semporna.

Project coordinator Prof Dr Ismail Ali said the fishermen "are only allowed to use single hook fishing lines to ensure the harvesting was sustainable".

Dr Ismail said they would monitor the progress before handing over the reefs to the fishermen in 2017.