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"Carite, cro cro, king fish... come and buy!" These are the words you would normally hear being shouted by fishermen from trucks or in the market. No fancy gimmicks, no long speeches—just a simple service of supply and demand.

The Lenten season is here and for those in the Christian community who are abstaining from meat during this five-week period, fish is often the likely substitute.

However, if your plan this weekend is to serve up a succulent fish dinner for your family, be prepared to pay a little extra, says Michael Ramroop.

Ramroop, a full-time fisherman for the past 30 years, knows the fish trade inside and out. He sells fish with his wife from dusk till dawn, and would not trade it for anything in the world. The Lenten season is usually one of the busiest times for most fishing depots, and at Ramroop's this was no exception.

When the Express caught up with him yesterday, just off Isaac Junction in Couva, Ramroop had a small group of people around his van as he went to work cutting and cleaning fish for his customers.

With carite and king fish selling at \$40 a pound wholesale, Ramroop said, "I know people find the price high, but the fact is this: the sea is just getting harder and harder to get fish. People usually come and ask for carite and shark, but these days sometimes people have take

anything that they can get.

"I went out with my boat last night and this morning to catch some carite and up till now I haven't been able to catch a single one," he added.

According to Ramroop, the differences between the new and old prices for these items are expected to be noticeable. But fishermen are finding it tougher and tougher to get fish from the sea. "When we do get they are very small, and have decided to take what we get or end up with no haul," he said.

"This is not something that has just started. This problem of hardly getting fish from the sea has been going for a few years now, but as a fisherman you tell yourself 'next year will be better'," Ramroop said.

Ramroop has been in the fish trade since he was ten years old and says while growing up there was never a problem for fish. However, as more and more trawlers began fishing day and night, the supply diminished rapidly.

He said, "A life of a fisherman is long and the work is hard. When I fish, I try to look for fish that are mature and of a certain size. However, because the seas are tough these days, sometimes I

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