

A note on the incidental catch of a whale shark

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On 21st, March, 2014, a whale shark, *Rhincodon typus* Smith, 1828 got entangled in a gill net which was brought ashore to Chinnankudi (11°05.25 N and 79°51.25 E) village by fishermen. On enquiry, a fibre glass boat fishing in the sea 20 km offshore at a depth of 35 m had found the fish entangled in their net. The fish had a total length of 4.5 m and girth of 3.0 m.

Pravin (2000) reported that from 1980s till 2000, the whale sharks were commercially exploited off Saurashtra coast (Veraval) of India for meat, fins, liver, skin and cartilage. Under the Indian Wildlife (Protection) Act, Schedule I it is now a protected species.

Accidental catch of whale sharks in nets is a



Fig. 1. Whale shark caught off the coast of Chinnankudi

serious issue. The fishermen who caught the fish in Chinnankudi village were totally unaware of the protected status of the fish highlighting the need for extension programmes to create awareness among the fishermen.