Giant Manta Ray, *Manta birostris* landed at Neendakara Fisheries Harbour

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Manta rays that belong to the family Mobulidae occurs in tropical, sub-tropical and temperate waters of the Atlantic, Pacific and Indian Oceans. A large Giant manta ray, *Manta birostris* (Walbaum, 1792) was landed at Needakara Fisheries Harbour on 12.05.2015. The ray was 370 cm in length and weighed 1100 kg. The information collected from the fishermen indicated that it was incidentally caught in a 12 m OAL outboard (9.9 hp x 2 engines) gillnet unit. The drift gill net called *Ozhukkuvala* (70-80 mm mesh size, 200 m long) was operated at about 44 m depths. Along with the manta ray, *Coryphaena hippurus, Istiophorus platypterus, Scomberomorus commerson, Mobula* spp. and *Auxis thazard* were also landed. The ray was auctioned for ₹55,000. Globally, the population of *M. birostris* are reported to be declining due to overexploitation and IUCN declared the species as “Vulnerable” in its annual assessments (IUCN, 2014). However, this species is only rarely reported in fish landings along Indian coast.

Landings of Giant Manta Rays at Cochin Fisheries Harbour

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Three numbers of Giant Manta ray, *Manta birostris* locally known as “Aana Thirandi” measuring 220, 291 and 285 cm in standard length and weighing 680, 1080 and 1050 kg respectively were landed at Cochin Fisheries Harbour on 27th March, 2015 (Fig. 1). The rays though landed by deep sea trawler, were caught by mechanized gill net boat operated at depth of 200 m off Kochi. Due to the big size of the rays caught, the gill net fishermen had transferred them to a deep sea trawler which operated nearby. The rays were identified as *Manta birostris* due to its characteristic features of terminal mouth differentiating it from the genus *Mobula* which has its mouth on the ventral side; large cephalic horns and white shoulder markings. Belonging to the family Myliobatidae, they are found in temperate and tropical seas and are primarily plankton feeders. They take a long time to reach...
A new record of deep-sea caridean shrimp *Plesionika narval* (Decapoda: Pandalidae) from the south west coast of India

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Pandalid shrimp, *Plesionika narval* (Fabricius, 1787) was recorded from trawl fishing off Kochi (9°59’ N 76°14’E), Kerala, south-west coast of India. The specimens were obtained from deep-sea shrimp trawlers operated at a depth range of 250-300 m. Samples were collected from the Kalamuku Landing Centre on 4th April 2014. 14 males and 12 females in good condition were segregated from the mixed deep-sea shrimp doscards and their measurements recorded (Table 1). Body was transparently pink-red in colour with a pair of sub dorsal and lateral red margined white stripes extending along almost entire body length from anterior carapace to posterior abdomen. Of the total 12 female specimens recorded, only 5 were non-berried while the rest were ovigerous. The eggs were spherical in shape with bluish green colour. The average egg diameter was found to be 0.2 mm. Voucher specimens (ED.2.4.3.4) were deposited in National Designated Repository (NDR) of ICAR-CMFRI, Kochi.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sex</th>
<th>Total Length (mm)</th>
<th>Carapace Length (mm)</th>
<th>Weight (gm)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>54-73</td>
<td>10-15</td>
<td>0.6-1.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female (berried)</td>
<td>70-73</td>
<td>13-14</td>
<td>1.1-1.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female (non berried)</td>
<td>70-75</td>
<td>13-15</td>
<td>1.1-1.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

sexual maturity, have long gestation periods and often give birth to a single pup. *Manta birostris* is considered as "Vulnerable" by the IUCN Red List of threatened Species. In 2014, trade of fins and gill plates of manta rays was regulated by including under CITES Appendix II.

The three rays were auctioned for ₹ 130,000. Out of the three specimens landed, two were mature females and the other a mature male with long, calcified claspers. One of the mature female measuring 556 cm in disc width when cut open, had a pup which measured 62 cm in standard length, 102.5 cm disc width and weighed 7.2 kg (Fig. 2). Stomachs of all the rays were empty. There is increasing demand for the gill plates of Manta rays in southeast Asian countries for medical purpose as well as for preparation of soups. Dried filter plates of Manta rays can fetch upto ₹ 8000 per kilogram.

Fig. 1. *Plesionika narval* (berried female)

Table 1. Details of the specimens landed

Fig. 2. Pup of *Manta birostris*