

## Necropsy findings and observations on marine mammals stranded in Gulf of Mannar coast

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A dead female dolphin was washed ashore on 19 April 2016 at Singhivalaikuchu, near Vedhalai, Ramanathapuram district, Tamil Nadu along the coast of Gulf of Mannar (N.09.260700; E.79.084858). Based on morphological features and teeth pattern, the specimen was identified as Indo-pacific bottlenose dolphin, *Tursiops aduncus*. A total of 26 morphometric parameters were recorded and given in the Table 1.

**Table 1. Morphometric measurements of the Indo-pacific bottlenose dolphin**

Morphometric	Measurement (cm)
Length, snout to melon	15
Length, snout to angle of mouth	32
Length, snout to blowhole	45
Length, snout to center of eye	39
Length, snout to anterior insertion of dorsal fin	84
Length, snout to tip of dorsal fin	96
Length, snout to fluke notch (total length)	210
Length, snout to anterior insertion of flipper	53
Length, snout to center of umbilicus	105
Length, snout to center of genital aperture	135
Length, snout to center of anus	150
Length, notch of flukes to center of anus	65
Length of flipper: anterior insertion to tip	35
Length of flipper: axilla to tip	25
Width of flipper: Maximum	15
Fluke span	40
Width of flukes	18

Height of dorsal fin	28
Width of dorsal fin	20
Base of dorsal fin	46
Girth: axillary	96
Girth: maximum (at anterior insertion of dorsal fin)	108
Girth: at level of anus	68
Blubber thickness: ventral	5
Total number of teeth on one side of upper jaw	25
Total number of teeth on one side of lower jaw	24

The specimen had relatively robust body with relatively longer and slender beak and a tall falcate dorsal fin. The melon was slightly convex and the flippers were typically curved with acutely rounded tips. The dorsal fin was tall and relatively more wide-based. The colour pattern could not be studied as most part of its skin had sloughed off. The total number of teeth in each half of the upper jaw was 25 and of the lower jaw was 24.

On 19 April 2016, a dead female sea cow (*Dugong dugon*) measuring more than two meters of total length was stranded along the Gulf of Mannar coast at Pudhumadam, Ramanathapuram district, Tamil Nadu (09.273203 N; 78.988599 E). The morphometric parameters recorded are given (Table 2.)

**Table 2. Morphometric measurements of the sea cow washed ashore**

Morphometric parameters	Measurement (cm)
Tip of snout to fluke notch	227
Tip of snout to center of anus	180
Tip of snout center of genital aperture	174
Tip of snout to center of umbilicus	140
Tip of snout to anterior insertion of flipper	62
Tip of snout to center of eye	35

Tip of snout to external ear	44
Center of eye to ear	10
Distance between centers of eyes	33
Center of eye to center of nostril (same side)	15
Flipper length, anterior insertion to tip	47
Flipper length, axilla to tip	33
Maximum width of flipper	20
Girth at umbilicus	150
Girth at axilla	138
Length, Muzzle	24
Breadth, Muzzle	22

Length, Chin	13
Breadth, Chin	15
Sex	Female
Weight (approximate)	250 kg

The necropsy was performed on the same day. There were no significant external injuries or lesions except few abrasions and sloughed off patches of skin which might be due to physical damage after death. The actual cause of death could not be determined as most of the internal organs were in advanced stage of decomposition.