

Unusual landing of blue shark

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On 3rd June 2017, unusual landing of blue shark *Prionace glauca* (Fig.1) was observed at Thengapattanam landing centre in Kanyakumari

district, (8^o14'21.67"N, 77^o10'03.87"E) of Tamil Nadu. The sharks had been caught by hook and line units operated off Mumbai coast, by fishermen from



Blue sharks landed at Thengapattanam landing centre

Thoothoor and Thengapattanam. Forty-six sharks, weighing 3.5 tonnes (t) were landed. All were males in the length range of 190-285 cm Total Length (TL) and weight range of 55-80 kg each. Blue sharks are reported to reach sexual maturity at about 180 cm (for males) while females mature by 220 cm (Santiago *et al.*, 2014 *Fisheries Research*, 160:18-32). Other elasmobranchs observed in the landings at Thengapattanam on the same day were spinetail devil ray *Mobula japonica* (3 numbers, 223, 220 and 236 cm Disc Width (DW)), pink whipray *Himantura*

fai (114 cm DW), tawny nurse shark *Nebrius ferrugineus* (145cm TL), silky shark *Carcharhinus falciformis* (2 numbers), scalloped hammerhead shark *Sphyrna lewini* (181cm TL), bigeye thresher shark *Alopias superciliosus* (200 cm TL) and Pelagic thresher shark *Alopias pelagicus* (234 cm TL).

The fishermen of Thoothoor and Thengapattanam are experts in hook and line operations for sharks and conduct multiday distant water shark fishing off Maharashtra and Gujarat coasts at 150-180 km from shore. Large-sized elasmobranchs caught here are landed in southern India, where the meat is salt-dried and sold for domestic consumption. Blue sharks are not regular contributors to the shark fishery in India and are rarely seen in such large numbers as in the present observation. Known to have a widespread distribution in temperate and tropical waters, the blue shark is relatively fast-growing, matures in 4-6 years and produces an average of 35 pups in each litter. The IUCN Red list of Threatened species categorises the blue shark as 'Near Threatened'.