

On the rare stranding of a lactating sea cow and its calf in the Gulf of Mannar coast

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Two female sea cows (*Dugong dugon*), possibly a dam and her female calf got stranded on 08th September 2021, along the Gulf of Mannar coast at Mandapam (9°16'49.872"N; 79°10'35.583"E), Ramanathapuram district, Tamil Nadu. The morphometric details are given in the Table. Both the animals had relatively robust body with minor skin aberrations. The carcass

of calf was comparatively fresh indicating that the mother would have died earlier and the calf later due to starvation. The internal organs of both the animals did not reveal any significant abnormalities towards the cause of death.

The sea cows (Dugongs) are found in Indo-pacific



Fig. 1. Stranded Sea cow (*Dugong dugon*) and its calf

Table 1 Morphometric details of the sea cows stranded at Mandapam, Tamil Nadu

Morphometric parameters	Measurement (cm)	
Tip of snout to fluke notch	: 336	131
Tip of snout to center of anus	: 237	101
Tip of snout to center of genital aperture	: 225	86
Tip of snout to center of umbilicus	: 185	65
Tip of snout to anterior insertion of flipper	: 80	28
Tip of snout to center of eye	: 40	18
Tip of snout to external ear	: 53	24
Center of eye to ear	: 12	6
Distance between centers of eyes	: 34	19
Center of eye to center of nostril (same side)	: 21	8
Flipper length, anterior insertion to tip	: 59	28
Flipper length, axilla to tip	: 43	23
Maximum width of flipper	: 24	12
Length of fluke	: 49	17
Width of fluke	: 69	26
Girth at umbilicus	: 214	101
Girth at axilla	: 161	75
Length, Muzzle (anterio-posterior)	: 26	13

Morphometric parameters	Measurement (cm)	
Breadth, Muzzle (lateral)	: 25	11
Length, Chin	: 17	8
Breadth, Chin	: 19	9
Sex	: Female	Female
Weight (approximate)	: 350 kg	60 kg

region and they are the only member of the order Sirenia. This herbivorous marine mammal mostly relies on bottom vegetation, primarily sea-grasses as their diet. As the sea grass beds are vulnerable to human destruction and disturbances the ultimate survival of this marine mammal would be uncertain. Moreover, there is an urgent need to carry out their population census in India.