

### Rare species of sting ray caught in live condition off Chettuva, Thrissur



Live porcupine ray *Urogymnus asperrimus* caught off Chettuva

**U***rogymnus asperrimus* commonly known as porcupine ray is a rare species of sting ray in the family Dasyatidae and the only member of its genus. This bottom-dwelling species is found throughout the tropical Indo-Pacific, as well as off West Africa. It favors sand, coal rubble and seagrass habitats in inshore waters to a depth of 30 m. The porcupine ray has a nearly circular,

plain-colored pectoral fin disc and a thin tail without any fin folds. Uniquely within its family, it lacks a venomous stinging spine. However, an adult ray can still defend itself ably with the many large, sharp thorns found over its disc and tail. Unregulated fishing

has led to this species declining in many parts of its range and thus has been listed as Vulnerable by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN). The species is protected under Schedule I of the Indian Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972.

A live specimen of female porcupine ray measuring 60.5 cm in disc width was



Porcupine ray *Urogymnus asperrimus*

caught in gill net by fishermen off Chettuva in Thrissur District, Kerala on 25th May 2012. On receiving information from the fishermen, a team from Demersal Fisheries Division, CMFRI visited the site. There were injuries on the body of the ray due to handling and hence the specimen was brought alive to CMFRI marine hatchery complex and was kept in a 5 t capacity FRP tank after giving prophylactic treatments. Though the ray survived in captivity, it succumbed to the injuries after a period of 7 days. Tissue sample has been collected for DNA barcoding and genetic analysis.

(Demersal Fisheries Division)