

ON THE OCCURRENCE OF DUGONG DUGON (MÜLLER) IN THE GULF OF CUTCH

The presence of dugong along the Cutch and Saurashtra coast was reported by Prater (1928), Moses (1942) and Mani (1960) where it is known popularly as 'Babloo'. Jones (1959) has given a fairly detailed account of *Dugong dugon* (Müller) along the Indian coast.

Towards the end of the year 1961 I came to know of the stranding of two dugongs at Piroton island in the Gulf of Cutch. However a visit to the island was possible only on 7-1-62 when the skeletal remains of the two animals were observed on the shore close to the Piroton lighthouse. Enquiries revealed that the stranding took place sometime early in October.

On 6-3-62 a dugong got entangled in a gill net and was brought to Salaya port in the Gulf of Cutch. The presence of two well developed axial mammae as reported by the fishermen suggests that the specimen was in all probability a female. I visited Salaya on 13-3-62 by which time the flesh was removed by the fishermen for preparing oil (though they did not get much of it as they failed to boil the flesh) and the intact skeleton with caudal fluke and the skin from the ventral side was left in the tidal waters of the creek.

The following measurements were made of the intact skeleton.

Total length (approximately) from snout to fork (fluke intact)	..	272.5 cms.
Fork to tip of caudal lobe (each side)	..	41.2 ..
Length from base of caudal to tip of fluke	..	65.8 ..
Tip of snout to atlas	..	38.4 ..
Length of incisor	..	4.1 ..

Silas (1961) has drawn attention to the desirability of having more information about the occurrence of dugong in the Gulf of Cutch. The present records during the months of March and October and the previous records during July (Mani 1960) suggest that the occurrence of dugong in the Gulf of Cutch is not merely sporadic.

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