ON A LEATHERBACK TURTLE CAUGHT FROM
PALK BAY, OFF MANDAPAM*

On 3-7-1988, one live leatherback turtle Derma-
chelys coriacea, popularly known as ‘Eluvarai aamai’ or
‘Dhoni aamai’ in Tamil, got entangled in gill net (‘Choo-
dai valai’) operated by one of the many chummed indigenous
boats in the fishing ground, 12 km northwest of Man-
dapam in the Palk Bay, was brought ashore at the Man-
dapam fish landing centre near the fish farm of the
Regional Centre. The depth of the fishing ground
where the gill net was operated, was about 12 m.

It was a male specimen, measuring 152 cm carapace
length. The other morphometric measurements of the
specimen are given in Table 1. As could be seen from
the table, the specimen on hand appears to be relatively
narrow bodied compared to the female specimens
reported earlier.

Table 1. The morphometric measurements (in cm) of
the Leatherback turtle

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year reported</th>
<th>Carapace length</th>
<th>Carapace width</th>
<th>Plastron length</th>
<th>Plastron width</th>
<th>Length of anterior flipper</th>
<th>Length of posterior flipper</th>
<th>Weight (kg)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1988</td>
<td>152</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>144.5</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>260 (estimated)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Male</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Camp.