



समुद्री मात्स्यकी सूचना सेवा

MARINE FISHERIES INFORMATION SERVICE

No. 95

MAY 1989



तकनीकी एवं विस्तार अंकावली TECHNICAL AND EXTENSION SERIES

केन्द्रीय समुद्री मात्स्यकी अनुसंधान संस्थान
कोचिन, भारत CENTRAL MARINE FISHERIES
RESEARCH INSTITUTE
COCHIN, INDIA

भारतीय कृषि अनुसंधान परिषद
INDIAN COUNCIL OF AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH

ON A SPERM WHALE STRANDED AT MADRAS*

On the evening of 8-3-1988, at about 1800 hrs, the fishermen at Kasimedu near Madras observed a whale struggling hard near to their fishing area in the coastal waters. The whale was alive till 2000 hrs and died later and stranded near the shore on the same day night.

The stranded whale was found to be a young female measuring 3.90 m, estimated to be one year old and

weighing about 3 tonnes (Fig. 1). The head of the whale measured approximately 1/3 of its body length and behind it the body tapered to the tail fluke. The characteristic massive barrel like head had an abruptly blunt snout. The size of the animal and the nature of the under developed teeth on the jaws led to the inference that it was a young specimen. The lower jaw was very narrow and did not reach the end of the snout.

* Reported by P. Nammalwar, S. Srinivasarangan and S. Mohan, Madras Research Centre of CMFRI, Madras.

Table 1. *Morphometric characters*

Particulars	Measurements (cm)
Total length (snout to notch of caudal flukes)	390
Tip of snout to anterior insertion of flipper	84
Tip of snout to centre of anus	278
Notch of the fluke to centre of anus	130
Length of the fluke on the outer curvature	43
Length of the fluke on the inner curvature	34
Distance between the extremities of flukes	20
Width at insertion of fluke	13
Length of dorsal fin base	3
Vertical height of dorsal fin	11
Length of flipper from anterior insertion to tip (from the base of flipper to caudal tip)	220
Depth of body at anal region	643
Depth of body at origin of flipper	703
Depth of body at the origin of dorsal	80
Depth of body in the region of eye	85
Tip of the lower jaw to the centre of anus	233
Length of upper jaw	64
Length of lower jaw	40
Diameter of the eye	1
Distance between the genital opening and anus	28
Total number of teeth (15 nos. in one side)	30 nos.
Estimated weight	3 tonnes (approx.)



Fig. 1. The sperm whale landed at Madras.

From the morphometric characters, enormous size of the head and tiny lower jaw, the animal was identified as a sperm whale belonging to the sub order *Odontoceti*, under the order cetacea, family *physeteridae* and

species *Physeter macrocephalus* which is a synonym of *Physeter catoden*. The external body measurements of the specimen are given in Table 1.

