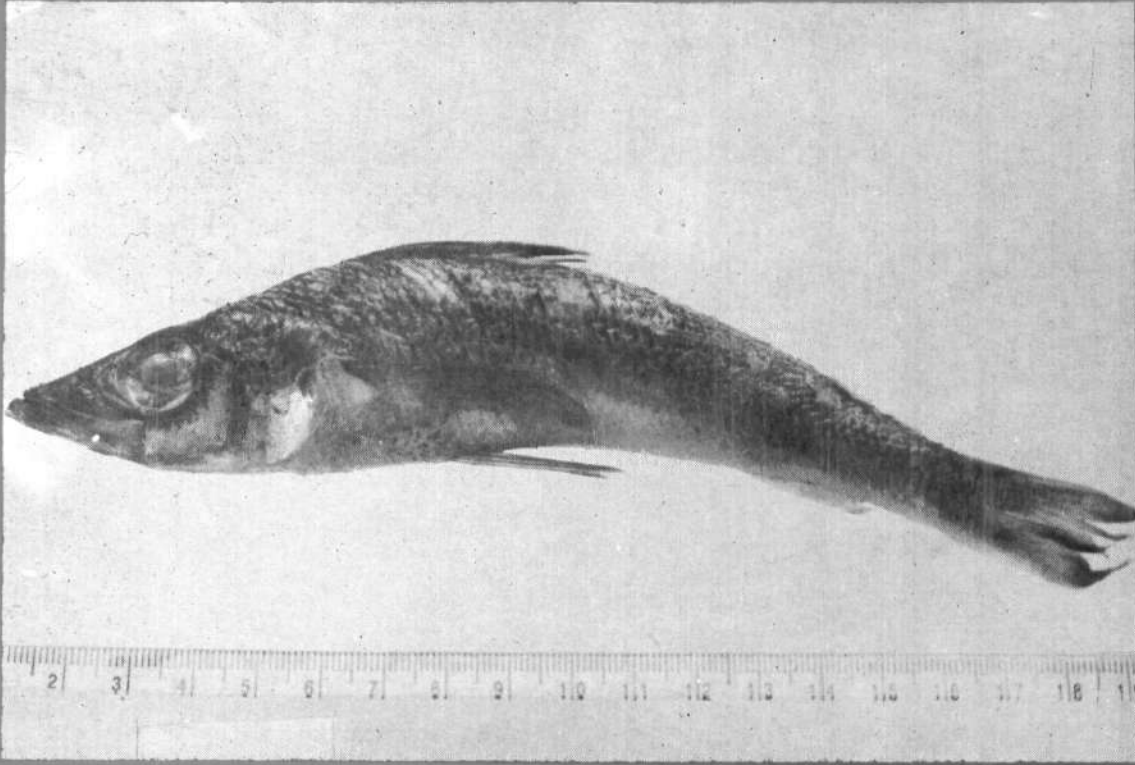




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Devil ray landed at Karwar*

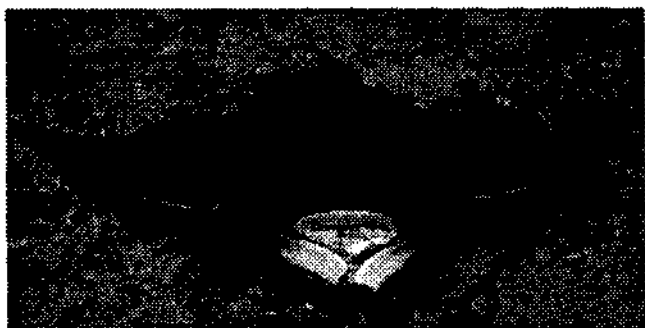


Fig. 1. Dorsal view of the Devil ray.

On 16th September, 1995, a devil ray, *Manta birostris* was landed at Karwar Fisheries Harbour by a purse seiner. The fishing vessel came across 5-6 numbers of devil rays chased by two dolphins. The crew ignored and proceeded further targetting pomfret shoals and came across large shoals of horse mackerel, *Megalaspis cordyla*. The seiner encircled the horse mackerel school and while hauling up the catch, they found one devil ray caught in the net. The fishermen failed to haul it on to the deck as it weighed nearly 1200 kg. Therefore, they towed it all the way to the Karwar Fisheries Harbour. While being towed the specimen delivered 3 young ones. The ray measured 5.5 m in width and 3 m in length. The specimen was sold for Rs. 3,600/- and the buyer who cut open it got another



Fig. 2. Ventral view of the Devil ray.

young one from inside the womb. The young one measured 1 m across and was black in colour.

On 20th September, another ray of the same species measuring 1.20 m in body width, was landed at the Honavar Fishery Harbour. Based on the information on the size of the young one of the devil ray landed at Karwar it can be surmised that the Honavar specimen might be 2 or 4 days old. The occurrence of these specimens indicate that there may be a breeding ground of this species off Karwar in the 40-45 m depth zone.

Another large devil ray measuring 3.86 m in total length and 4.47 m in width, was caught on

1-12-1987 from the inshore waters of the southwest coast off Karwar at 40 m depth by gillnet (Mar. Fish. Infor. Serv., T & E Ser., No. 85, 1985, p.11). It weighed 800 kg.

The two specimens of *M.birostris* caught on 3-5-1990 from Tuticorin measured 2.17 and 2.11 m in total length and 5.54 and 5.25 m in width respectively (Mar. Fish. Infor. Serv., T & E. Ser., No. 106, 1990, p.11). The former specimen was a female which weighed 1200 kg and the latter a male weighed 1150 kg. They were caught at a depth of 50 m by gillnets.

On 4th October 1995, another four numbers of young devil rays of *Manta birostris* were landed by gill nets at Binaga Bay. One of the specimens measured 1.50 m in width, 85 cm in length with the tail length of 1.68 m. The mouth was 18 cm wide, orbital width was 2 cm and rostral flaps 19 cm in length. Each specimen weighed nearly 35 kg.

***Reported by. V.S. Kakati and C.K. Dinesh, Karwar Research Centre of CMFRI, Karwar - 581 301.**