ISSN 0254-380 X

भाकृअनुप
ICAR

समुद्री मात्स्यिकी सूचना सेवा
MARINE FISHERIES INFORMATION SERVICE

No. 141 JANUARY - FEBRUARY - MARCH 1996

तकनीकी एवं विस्तार अंकावली
TECHNICAL AND EXTENSION SERIES

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

भारतीय कृषि अनुसंधान परिषद
INDIAN COUNCIL OF AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH

On the stranding of a young Fin whale at Kanyakumari, Tamil Nadu*

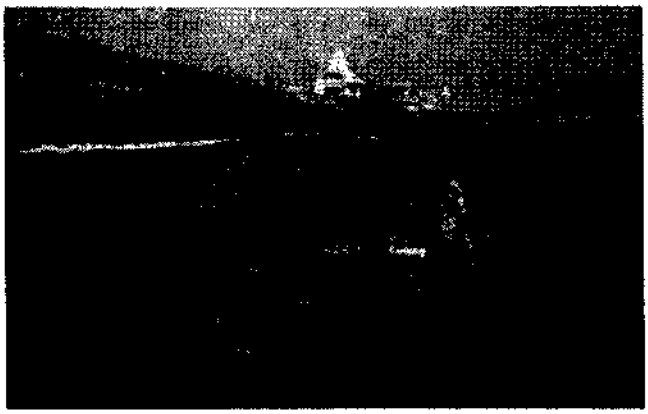

Fig. 1. The young Fin whale stranded at Kanyakumari, Tamil Nadu.

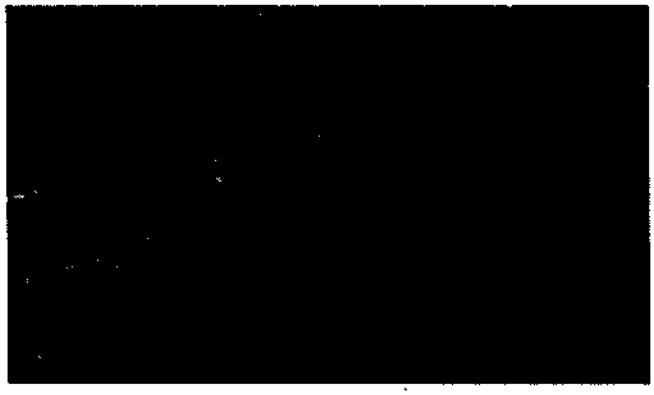

Fig. 2. A view from the front of the young Fin whale standed at Kanyakumari, Tamil Nadu.

A 6.8 m long Fin whale, *Balaenoptera physalus* (L.) commonly known as Common rorqual or Razor-back, and one among baleen whales which fall within the cetacean family Balaenopteridae (Rorquals) was stranded at Kanyakumari on 20-11-1995 at 1530 hours about 100 m away from Gandhi Mandapam at its western side. With serrations and fresh wounds on its back and lateral sides it got lodged among partially submerged rocks near the shore (intertidal) and died after an hour. Next day some fishermen towed it to the eastern side of the Mandapam in order to remove its blubber. But, later they were satisfied with removing only its dorsal fin and the flippers. As the carcass was lying amidst waves, in the evening, it started drifting to the interior waters and soon vanished from visibility.

Fin whales are known to move in schools usually and rarely singly. A newly born Fin whale, according to earlier studies, measures 6.5 m in length and its weaning starts only when it attains a length of around 12 m while an adult reaches a maximum length of 24 m. It is unlikely that the whale strayed away from its mother and the school on its own since it is a young one entirely dependent on its mother's milk for food. It is presumed that the wounds on its body may have been either due to attack of sharks or injuries caused by moving mechanised boats and that the resultant commotion could have caused the school to disperse making the young whale to go astray, become isolated and run aground.

Measurements other than its length could not be taken since it was partly immersed in water (Figs. 1 & 2) in the rock-strewn shore where there was incessant wave action.

*** Reported by Jacob Jerold Joel, Vizhinjam Research Centre of C.M.F.R.I., Vizhinjam, and I.P. Ebenezer, P. Paul Sigamony and A. Prosper, Kanyakumari Field Centre of C.M.F.R.I., Kanyakumari - 629 702.**