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अनुसंधान संस्थान RESEARCH INSTITUTE  
कोचिन, भारत COCHIN, INDIA

भारतीय कृषि अनुसंधान परिषद  
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# ON THE LANDING OF GIANT-SIZED WHITE-SPOTTED SHOVEL NOSE RAY FROM TUTICORIN WATERS, GULF OF MANNAR\*

Two shovel nose rays, *Rhyncobatus djiddensis* (Forsk.) measuring 316 cm and 279 cm in total length were landed at Tuticorin North landing centre on 11-6-92 and 19-6-92 respectively (Fig. 1). They were caught by bottom-set gill-net *thirukai valai* (mesh size of 30-45 cm) at a depth of 20 - 25 m. Local fishermen call this ray as *paal uluvai*. The morphometric measurements are given in Table 1. The present record of *Rhyncobatus djiddensis* with a total length of 316 cm is the largest from Indian seas, the previous record being 297 cm (Setna and Sarangdhar, *Rec. Indian Mus*, XLVI, 1948).

Both the rays were females. They fetched a price of Rs. 4,620 and Rs. 4,625 in open auction. Since the fins of this species are valued very high in the international markets, the ray is sold at a high price even in local market in India. The fins are cut and sun-dried after applying lime powder on the cut ends. Fins measuring 30 - 40 cm and above fetch Rs. 3,500 - 3,700 per kg of dry weight and those below 30 cm get Rs. 900 per kg. Normally the first dorsal fin, second dorsal fin and the upper lobe of the caudal fin are sold for export. Fins of this species are called 'white fins', whereas the shark fins are called 'black fins'.



Fig. 1. *Rhyncobatus djiddensis* measuring 316 cm landed at Tuticorin.

TABLE 1. Morphometric measurements (mm) of *Rhyncobatus djiddensis* landed at Tuticorin (Gulf of Mannar)

Particulars	11-6-92	19-6-92
Total length	3,160	2,790
Approximate weight	200kg	150kg
Sex	Female	Female
Snout to first dorsal	1,450	1,330
Snout to second dorsal	2,155	1,970
Snout to anal	2,630	2,280
Snout to eye	455	450
<b>First dorsal</b>		
Height	530	500
Breadth	375	360
Curvature	450	420
<b>Second dorsal</b>		
Height	405	390
Breadth	290	260
Curvature	320	300
<b>Caudal</b>		
Height	530	510
Curvature	520	500
Eye diameter (horizontal)	30	28
" (vertical)	20	18
Inter-orbital distance	150	142
Spiracle length (horizontal)	60	53
" (vertical)	82	77
Body breadth at first dorsal	1,380	1,200
" at second dorsal	950	820
" at caudal	300	275

\*Prepared by : S. Rajapackiyam, T. S. Balasubramanian, K. M. S. Ameer Hamsa and H. Mohamed Kasim, Tuticorin Research Centre of Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute, Tuticorin - 628 001.