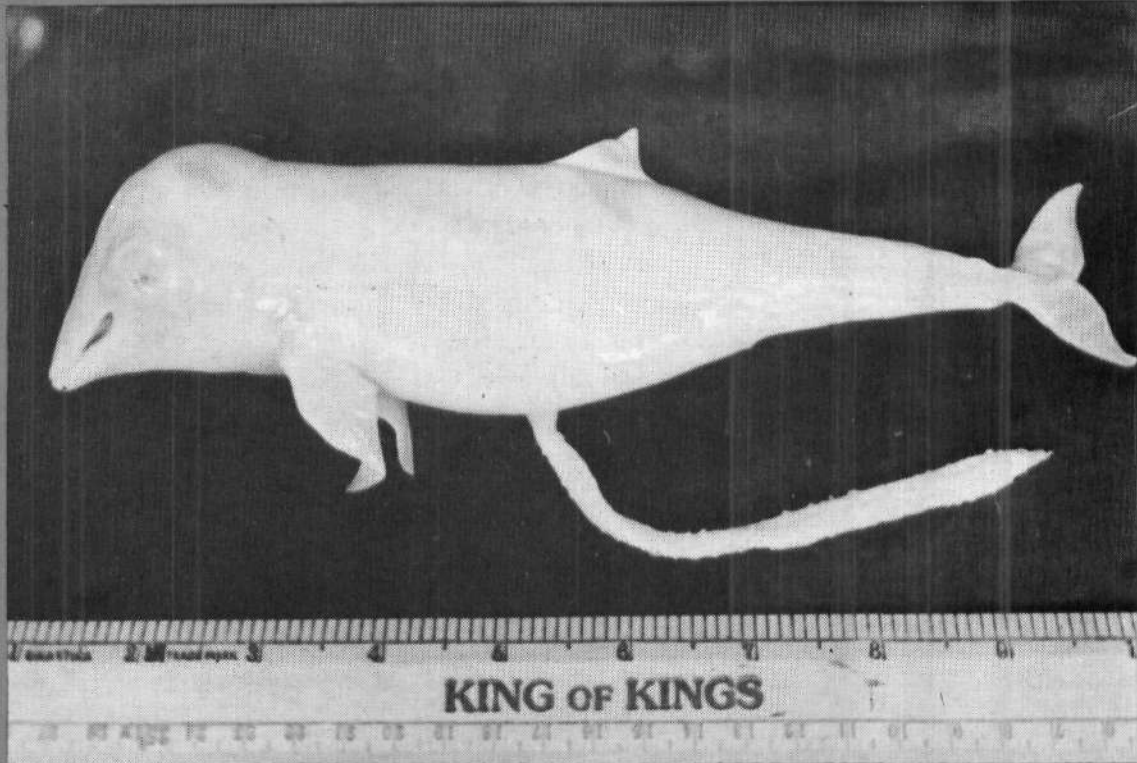




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भारतीय कृषि अनुसंधान परिषद
INDIAN COUNCIL OF AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH

A NOTE ON THE FOETUS OF THE HUMP-BACK DOLPHIN FROM TUTICORIN COAST, GULF OF MANNAR*

Very few reports are available on the foetuses of dolphin. On 16-2-'94 a female Hump - back dolphin *Sousa chinensis* (Osbeck) measuring 2,235 mm and weighing 80 kg was accidentally caught in drift gillnet off Tuticorin. When the dolphin was cut opened a foetus measuring 250 mm was obtained from it (Fig. 1).

The foetus was more or less a perfect replica of the adult dolphin except that it possessed the umbilical cord. The beak of the foetus was at 152° to trunk, eyes opened, teeth not sprouted but tender teeth gums were clearly visible, dorsal fin and caudal fluke well developed, genital and anal opening far apart, umbilical cord robust, 150 mm long with papillae like processes arranged in rows, body uniformly light brown, few black patches on vertical side, skin very delicate and tender and bristles absent on beak. Morphometric measurements of the foetus are given in Table 1.

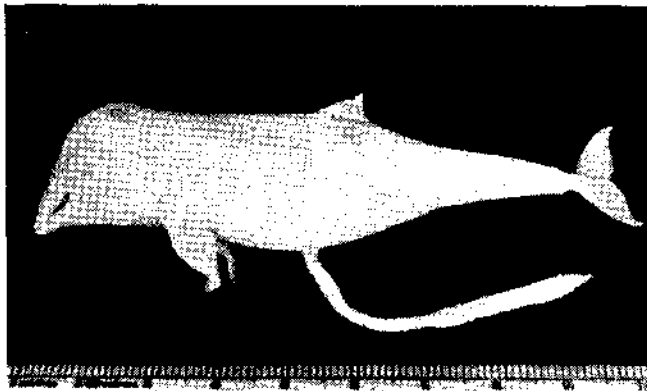


Fig. 1. The foetus of dolphin *Sousa chinensis*.

TABLE - 1. Morphometric measurements (mm) of *Sousa chinensis* off Tuticorin

Tip of upper jaw to notch of fluke	250
Tip of upper jaw to centre of eye	43
Tip of upper jaw to apex of melon	41
Tip of upper jaw to angle of gape	30
Tip of upper jaw to external auditory meatus	51
Centre of eye to angle of mouth	15
Centre of eye to external auditory meatus	15
Centre of eye to centre of blowhole	26
Tip of upper jaw to blowhole	40
Tip of upper jaw to anterior insertion of flipper	60
Tip of upper jaw to tip of dorsal fin	175
Tip of upper jaw to mid point of umbilicus	126
Tip of upper jaw to genital aperture	154
Tip of upper jaw to centre of anus	170
Length of flipper (anterior insertion to tip)	45
Length of flipper (axilla to tips)	30
Width of flipper (maximum)	16
Height of dorsal fin	15
Width of fluke (tip to tip)	54
Length of umbilical cord	150
Number of bristles on the beak	Absent
Angle of the beak to the trunk	152°
Weight	240 gm
Sex	Female

* Prepared by G. Arumugam, T.S. Balasubramaniam and M. Chellappa, Tuticorin Research Centre of CMFRI, Tuticorin - 628 001.

Lal Mohan (1982) estimated the age of foetus of 241 mm of *T. aduncus* as 2¹/₂ month, that of 91 mm foetus to be about 1 month and the 471 mm foetus of *S. plumbea* as 5¹/₂ month old. By comparing the size of the present foetus of *S. chinensis* it is presumed that the age would be between 2¹/₂ - 3 month old. Based on the gestation period and the age determined for the foetus, the mating season of *S. chinensis* is likely to be during

October - November as a 2¹/₂ - 3 month old foetus was collected during February along the Tuticorin coast. But this could be confirmed beyond doubt if only some more reports are available on this aspect.

Such endangered animals have to be protected. Fishermen should be educated to save such entangled specimens by releasing them back into the sea.

OBSERVATIONS ON A WHALE SHARK *RHINODON TYPUS* SMITH CAUGHT AT ATHANKARAI ALONG THE PALK BAY COAST, TAMIL NADU*

On 26.10.92 a large specimen of whale shark *Rhinodon typus* Smith was caught in a shore-seine at Athankarai in live condition but died the next day. The net was badly damaged by the whale shark.

As there was no demand for its flesh, the fish was cut into pieces and buried near the sea shore. The morphometric measurements of the whale shark (cm) are given below:

Body characters	Measurements (cm)
Total length (tip of snout to tip of caudal fin)	1,022
Tip of snout to origin of pectoral fin	204
Tip of snout to centre ridge	35
Length of pectoral fin	210
Tip of snout to first gill opening	148
Tip of snout to last gill opening	217
Length of upper caudal fluke	225
Length of lower caudal fluke	129
Head length	240

Width of head	224
Tip of the snout to eye	65
Length of mouth opening	145
Eye diameter	4.5
Eye length	6.5
Tip of snout to spiracle	95
Length of spiracle	4.5
Width of spiracle	3.3
Height of first dorsal fin	153
Tip of snout to caudal fluke	822
Height of first gill opening	81
Height of second gill opening	94
Height of third gill opening	87
Height of fourth gill opening	80
Height of fifth gill opening	60
Weight	5 t
Sex	Male

* Reported by C. Kasinathan and N. Ramamoorthy, Regional Centre of CMFRI, Mandapam Camp - 623 520.