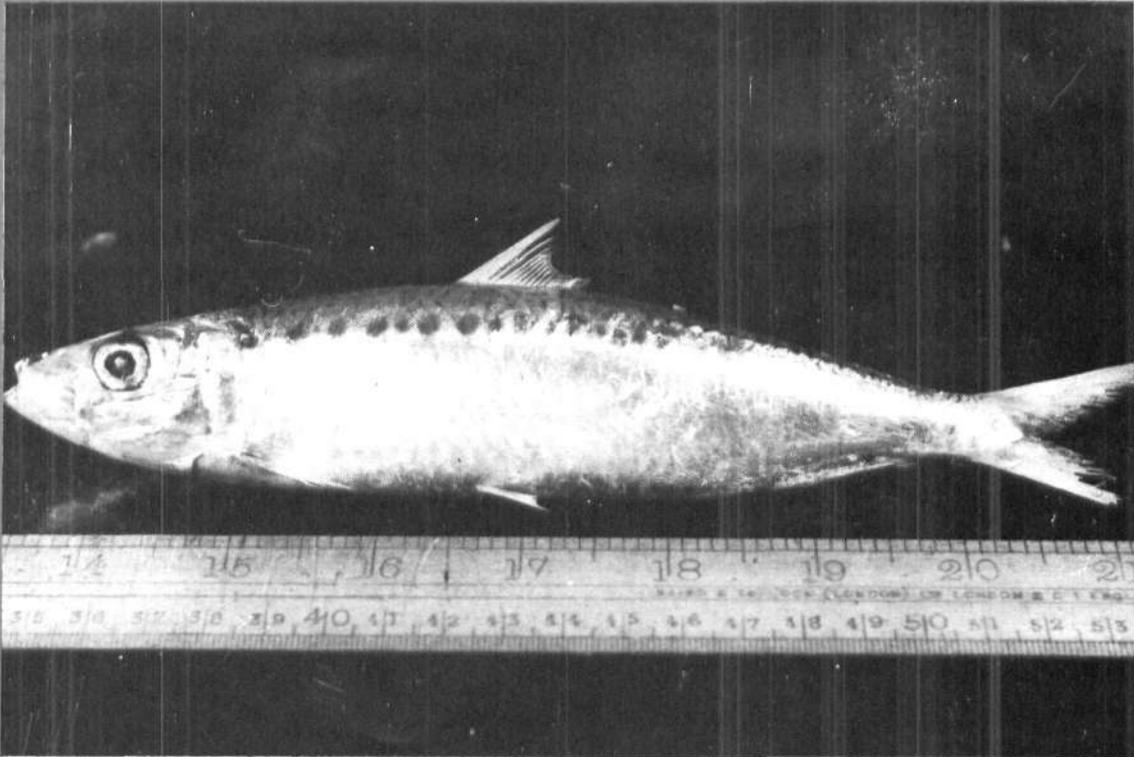




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केन्द्रीय समुद्री मात्स्यकी अनुसंधान संस्थान कोचिन, भारत CENTRAL MARINE FISHERIES RESEARCH INSTITUTE COCHIN, INDIA

भारतीय कृषि अनुसंधान परिषद
INDIAN COUNCIL OF AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH

ON THE SEI WHALE *BALAENOPTERA BOREALIS* LESSON STRANDED ALONG PALK BAY COAST NEAR PAMBAN LIGHT HOUSE*

Instances of whales stranded in shallow waters and subsequently washed ashore along the coasts of India are not uncommon. Further, the frequency of such strandings on the east coast is more than on the west coast. This is the eighth record of stranding of Sei whale from the east coast (Table 2).

A Sei whale got entangled in a gill net operated near Katchathievu on 27-1-90 at a depth of 8.5 m at about 1900 hrs. Four boats joined together and brought the whale ashore near Pamban Light House on the 28th morning in live condition. Attempts were made to push the whale back into the sea but did not succeed. The medium sized female whale measured 11.4 m in total length and weighed about 7000 kg. The specimen was identified as *Balaenoptera borealis* Lesson (Fig. 1) and it had 47 throat grooves. The morphometric measurements are given in Table 1.

Though the whales used to get stranded in all the months of the year, most of the strandings take place during December - January when the sea is very rough during the northeast monsoon.

Table 1. Details of morphometric measurements of *Balaenoptera borealis* Lesson brought to the light house near Pamban in Palk Bay on 29th January 1990

Morphometric characters	Measurements (cm)
Tip of upper jaw to deepest part of fluke notch	1140
Tip of upper jaw to centre of anus	975
Tip of upper jaw to centre of genital slit	870
Tip of upper jaw to end of ventral grooves	680
Tip of upper jaw to centre of umbilicus	790
Tip of upper jaw top of dorsal fin	670

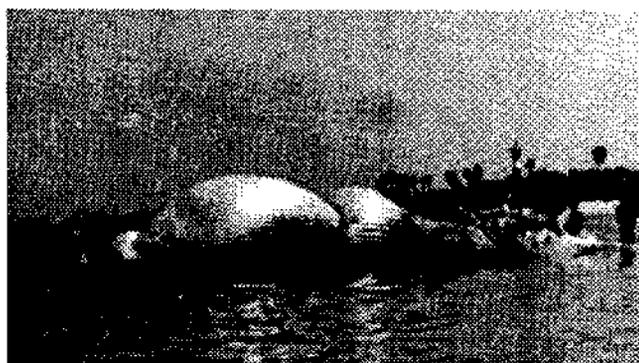


Fig. 1. *Balaenoptera borealis* brought to the light house near Pamban, Palk Bay on Jan. 28th 1990.

Tip of upper jaw to anterior insertion of flipper	340
Outer curvature of flipper	125
Inner curvature of flipper	100
Flipper width	45
Height of body at dorsal fin	190
Height of body at region of anus	115
Body circumference in region from flipper to flipper (ventral region)	1020
Circumference at caudal fluke	160
Number of throat grooves	47
Sex	Female
Weight	7000 kg

TABLE 2. Stranding of Sei whale *Balaenoptera borealis* Lesson along the east coast of India

S.No.	Date of Stranding	Place	Dead/alive	Total length (m)	Sex	Reference
1.	23-12-1971 (stranded)	Manakad near Mandapam	Dead	15.53	-	G. Venkataraman <i>et al.</i> (1973) <i>Indian J. Fish.</i> , 20 (2): 634-638.
2.	31-01-1981 (stranded)	Mallipatnam	Dead	9.90	-	P.S.B.R. James & R. Soundarajan (1980) <i>J. mar. biol. Ass. India</i> , 22 (1&2): 175.
3.	18-03-1983 (stranded)	Dhanushkodi	Dead	13.80	-	P.S.B.R. James & Lal Mohan 1987. <i>Mar. Fish. Infor. Serv., T & E Ser.</i> , No. 71: 1-16.
4.	26-02-1988 (washed ashore)	Tuticorin	Dead	12.00	Male	K. Venkataramanujam <i>et al.</i> 1988. <i>Investigation on Cetaceae</i> . XXI 247-249.
5.	18-05-1988 (stranded)	Kayalpatnam	Dead	10.02	Female	H. Mohamed Kasim & T.S. Balasubramanian (1989). <i>Mar. Fish. Infor. Serv., T & E Ser.</i> , No. 95: 12-14.
6.	May, 1988 (brought to shore)	Tuticorin	—	7.50	-	CMFRI News Letter, 1988, No. 40:5.
7.	27-01-1990 (brought to shore)	Pamban	—	11.4	Female	Present report
8.	21-01-1992 (washed ashore)	Theedai	—	14.00	Female	P. Nammalwar <i>et al.</i> (in press)

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