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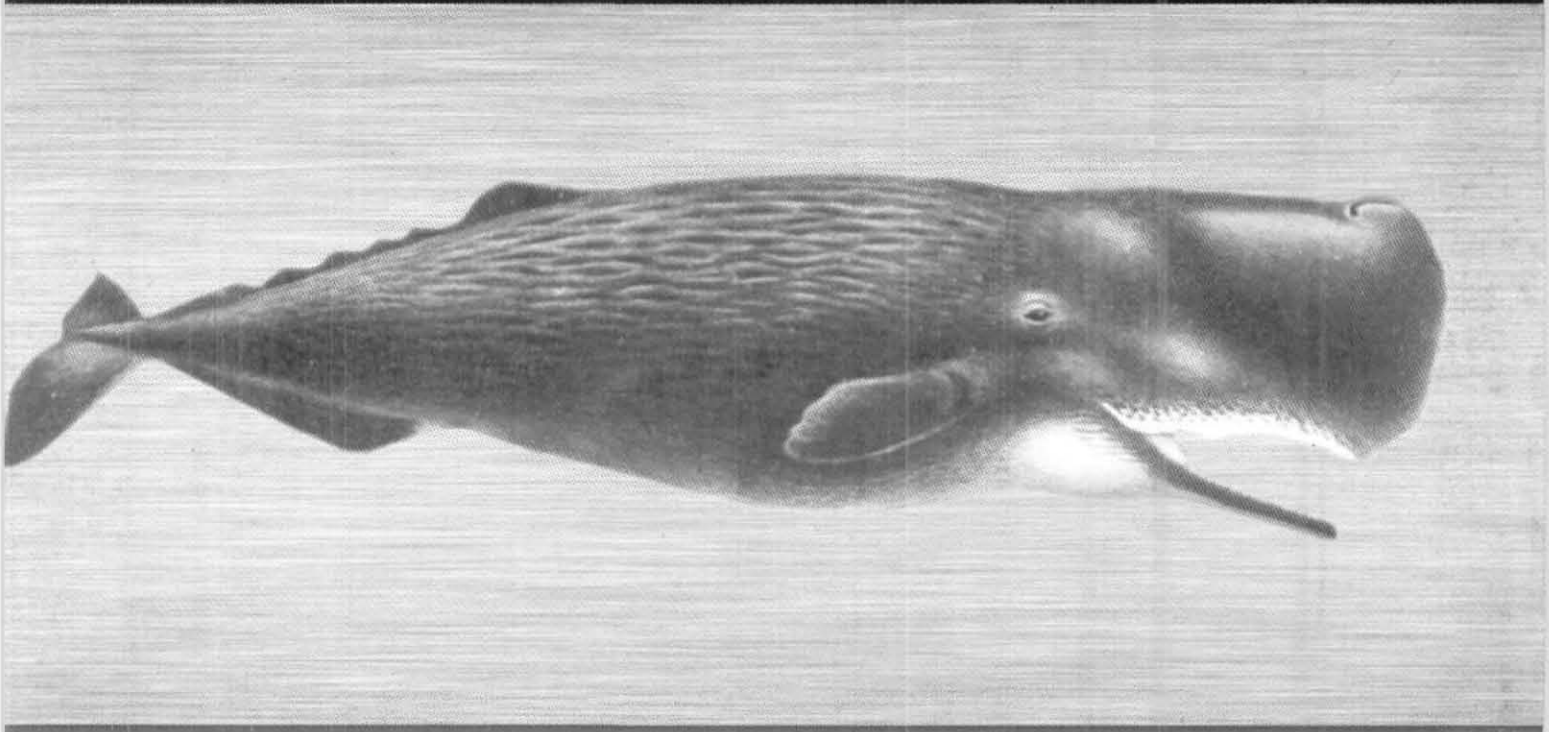

TECHNICAL AND EXTENSION SERIES

CENTRAL MARINE FISHERIES RESEARCH INSTITUTE

COCHIN, INDIA

(INDIAN COUNCIL OF AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH)

1005 Accidental catches of dolphins in Kanyakumari coast from 1995 to 2000

Dolphins frequently enter the coastal waters mainly for feeding or breeding and often get entangled in fishing gears such a gill nets, trawl nets and purse seines. Our information regarding dolphins are restricted mainly to the reports on the accidental catch and occasional strandings from different parts of the coast. Accidental catch of 4 dolphins along Kanyakumari coast during 1995-2000 is given.

Instances of accidental entanglings of dolphins by gilnets, hooks and lines and trawlers, occasional stranding along both west and east coasts during 1995 to 2000

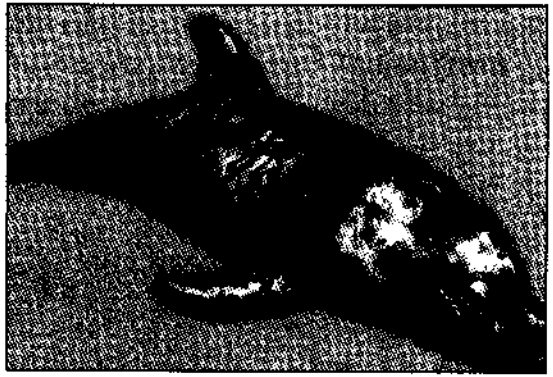

Fig. 1. Bottle-nose dolphin washed ashore at Kanyakumari on 23.02.99

are listed in Table 1. The major threat to dolphins at present is the gill nets. Since very often fishermen discard the dolphins back into the sea, their species identity and mortalities go unreported. A field identification key for dolphins of Indian coast is given in Table 2 along with the conservation mea-

Table 1. List of reported accidental catches of different species of dolphins along the coast of India from 1995 to 2000

Sl. No.	Date of capture	Place	Name of the species	Nos.	Length (in cm)	Weight (kg)	Sex	Gear	Reference Mar. Fish.Infor. Ser.
1.	16-2-94	Tuticorin	*Sousa chinensis* with foetus	1	223.5 (250 mm)	80 240 g	F	Gill Net	No. 138:P.14, 1995
2.	15-9-94	Mandapam	(3 dolphins)						
	15-9-95	and nearby	1. *Sousa chinensis*	1	255	200	F	Washed	
	&	places	2. *Tursiops truncatus aduncus*	1	221	125	M	ashore	No. 138:P. 11-14, 1995
	9-1-95	(Ramnad Dist)	3. Species not known	1	—	—	—		
3.	14-9-95	Ullal (Mangalore)	*Neophocaena phocaenoides*	1	93	—	—	Washed ashore	No. 140:P. 17, 1995
4.	11-11-95	Digha (West Bengal)	*Tursiops truncatus aduncus*	1	265	80	—	Washed ashore	No. 142:P.17-18, 1998
5.	20-3-97	Janjira Murud (Maharastra)	*Delphinus delphis*	1	305	250	—	Gill net	No. 152:P. 17, 1998
6.	—	Dummlapeta (Andrapradesh)	*Delphinus delphis*	2	216 209	200 180	F F	Gill net	No. 152:P.17-18, 1998
7.	7-7-97	Kakkinada	*Tursiops truncatus aduncus*	1	245	—	F	Gill net	No. 155: P.20, 1998
8.	14-10-97	Balaramapuram (Andrapradesh)	*Delphinus delphis* Mass stranding of 9 dolphins 7 released back in to the sea	9	220 222	— —	M F	Shore seine	No. 158:P.19-20, 1988
9.	18-10-97	Veraval	*Sousa chinensis*	1	201	—	—	Gill net	No. 158:P. 19-20, 1988
10.	15-11-97	Janjira Murud (Maharastra)	*Delphinus delphis*	1	250	—	—	Washed ashore	No. 155:P. 19,1998
11.	5-9-98	Kovalam (Vizhinjam)	*Tursiops truncatus aduncus*	1	250	150	M	Shore seine	No. 159:P.18, 1999
12.	31-8-98	Vizhinjam	Risso's dolphin *Grampus griseus*	1	250	150	M	Shore seine	No. 159:P. 18, 1999
13.	18-1-99	Rameswaram	*Neophocaena phocaenoides*	1	144	40	F	Washed ashore	No. 163:P. 15, 2000
14.	23-2-99	Kanyakumari	*Tursiops truncatus aduncus*	1	212	120	F	Washed ashore	No. 163:P. 14-15, 2000
15.	28-6-99	Vellapathy (Tuticorin)	*Sousa chinensis*	28	98-227	20-146 Young ones 3	F19,M6	Dynamite fishing	No. 163:P.10-12, 2000
			Stenella longirostris	9	180-238	75-185	F5, M4		
			Decomposed (Mass stranding of 42)	5	—	—	—	—	
16.	30-6-99	Beemapally (Vizhinjam)	Risso's dolphin *Grampus griseus*	3	130 132 138	— —	— —	Shore seine	No. 163:P. 10, 2000
17.	21-9-99 & 30-9-2000	Vaipar (Tuticorin)	*Stenella longirostris* *Stenella longirostris*	1 1	110 138	20 30	M M	Gill net Gill net	No. 167:P. 15-16, 2000
18.	23-4-2000	Karapad (Tuticorin)	Species not identified, came to the shore & released back into the sea	2	—	—	—	—	
19.	24-4-2000	Karapad (Tuticorin)	*Tursiops truncatus aduncus*	1	262	175	M	Came to the shore	No. 167:P. 9-10, 2000
20.	—	Seema bunder Gujarat	*Neophocaena phocaenoides*	1	88.5	14	M	Dol net	No. 168:P. 23-24, 2001
21.	17-12-1995	Kovalam (KK)	*Stenella longirostris*	1	170.5	75	F	Gill net	Present report
22.	12-03-1997	Mela manakudi	*Tursiops truncatus aduncus*	1	262	160	F	Gill net	Present report
23.	23-11-2000	Usaravallai (KK)	*Tursiops truncatus aduncus*	1	127.8	28	—	Washed ashore	Present report

Table 2. Field identification key for dolphins of Indian coast

Sl. No.	Name of the species	Number of teeth on one side of the jaw	Colour	Maximum size (m)	Distinct characters	Remarks
1.	*Tursiops truncatus aduncus*, (Bottle-nose	24-28 usually 25, lower jaw somewhat larger	Dark grey brown on back, light grey on belly	3.7-4 m in length	Well defined snout, snout with bulbous forehead, Dorsal fin broad at base.	Largest of all dolphins trained in oceanaria. Life span 25 years, 14% of dolphin landing
2.	*Delphinus delphis* (Common dolphin)	62-65 small pointed conical teeth usually 61.	Dark blue	2.5	Narrow beak dorsal fin tapers back with a concave margin.	It can be easily trained and kept in Oceanaria 37% of the total catch of dolphin.
3.	*Sousa chinensis* (Hump-back dolphin)	34-37 conical teeth	Uniformly grey	2.8 to 3.2	Beak long characterized by hump on its back.	Kept in Oceanaria, enter river mouth, estuaries and backwaters. 5% of the total dolphin catch.
4.	*Stenella longirostris* (spinner dolphin)	44-51 slightly curved inwards	Tip of the snout distilnctly grey black dark grey in colour	2.5	Body slender belly white	Off-shore forms. Occur in groups, come to coastal waters for food. Indicator species for tuna. 44% of the total dolphin catch.
5.	*Neophocaena phocaenoides*	15-19	Black		No dorsal fin forehead rounded	Known as black porpoises or finless porpoises acend to river and estuaries, abundant in Bombay coast.

sures to be taken up. On 17-12-1995 a dolphin was caught in a gill net operated off Kovalam, near Kanyakumari which was brought to Kovalam landing centre next day morning. It was identified as a female spinner dolphin, *Stenella longirostiris* (Gray). It measured 170.5 cm in total length and weighed about 75 kg. The dolphin was transported to Kerala along with other fishes for consumption. On 12-03-1997, a female bottle-nose dolphin *Tursiops truncates aduncus* of 262 cm in total length and weight of about 160 kg was accidentally caught in a gill net operated off Mela Manakudy, one of the major gill net operating centres in Kanyakumari district. A third dolphin was washed ashore at Kanyakumari on 23-02-1999 with a head injury. It was a female of 212 cm in total length, weighing about 120 kg and had 24 teeth on one side of lower jaw (Fig. 1) and identified as bottle nose dolphin. The presence of blood on the body and injury on the head near upper jaw suggested that the animal might have met with an accident such as hitting against a trawler boat. This specimen was preserved in the Govt museum, Kanyakumari. On 23-11-2000 morning a young live bottle-nose dolphin measuring 127.8 cm and weighing about 28 kg. (Fig.2) was washed ashore at Usaravillai village, situated between Mela Manakudy and Pallam landing centres. The specimen was dark grey above and grayish below. Only 15 teeth were present on one side of both jaws and the rest of the teeth were in developing stages embedded in sockets in the jaw.

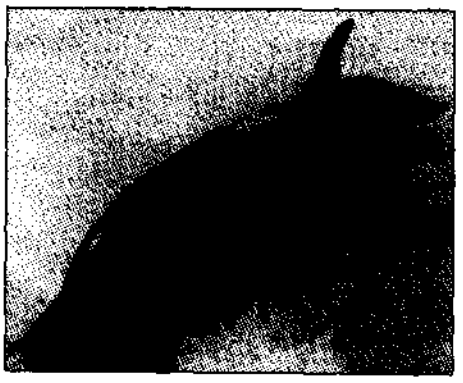

Fig.2. Young bottle-nose dolphin washed ashore at Usaravilai, near Mela Manakudi on 23.11.2000

The major threat to dolphin is the increasing number of gill nets in operation in Kanyakumari coast. There are about 16,832 gill nets in K.K. Dist. The development of transparent nylon nets has increased the mortality of dolphins in gill nets. Accidental deaths of dolphins in gill nets are more frequent than with other gears. Dolphins are sometimes caught in trawl net or shrimp trawler. Baby dolphins move slower than adults and are easily caught in the propellers of the trawlers. Most of the young dolphins were taken away by the fishermen for consumption and older dolphin meat is used as bait for shark fishing.

It is necessary to accord endangered status and adopt necessary conservation measures for dolphins. Awareness among fishermen through extension services for creating sympathy for the dolphins and releasing them back will help in saving the dolphins from extinction.

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