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971 **Stranding of a whale (*Balaenoptera* sp.) at Murdeshwar beach, Uttar Kannad district of Karnataka**

A baleen whale, *Balaenoptera* sp. was found washed ashore, dead at Murdeshwar beach north of Bhatkal on 10.1.2001. The whale was reported to be found dead and floating in the



A whale *Balaenoptera* sp. stranded at Murudeswar beach north off Bhatkal

inshore waters off Honavar for about one week before it was washed ashore. The carcass was in highly decomposed state and detailed measurements could not be made. The total length of the whale was 11.55 meters with a maximum body diameter of 4.10 m. The weight was approximately 8 to 10 tonnes. The smell emanating from the carcass was nauseating and was a problem for the residents. The local residents buried the body with the help of social workers.

Last year also, a whale was washed ashore in Bhatkal on 10.10.1999. Fishermen are of the belief that the death and stranding of a massive marine mammal of this kind is a bad omen and fear that this will be a bad year for them.

Reported by: Uday V. Arghekar, Bhatkal Field Centre of CMFRI, Bhatkal.