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## AN ACCOUNT ON THE DISPOSAL OF DEEP SEA SHARKS AND SKATES AT TUTICORIN \*

In recent days additional fish production has been achieved by extending the fishing effort beyond the traditional fishing grounds and by diversification of the fishing effort as well. In view of the very high export potential of shark fins and also the abundance of sharks in the inshore and offshore areas, exploitation of deep sea sharks attracted many dare - devil fishermen to concentrate on this lucrative fishery.

Engaging long lines (No 30 hooks) for the exploitation of sharks of the inshore and offshore waters of Gulf of Mannar area is not a new development. But it is significant to note that out of the landings of deep sea sharks made at Keelakarai (near Mandapam) large size (1 to 3 m) sharks are brought to Tuticorin for better marketing.

These days the catch is being regularly brought to Tuticorin by engaging vans at the rate of Rs. 350/- to Rs. 400/- per trip covering a distance of 100 km and auctioned. This type of auctioning is carried out on fixed days i.e., Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday which has

created keen competition among buyers from Kerala. During 1990, the active season lasted for about five months commencing from January.

During our observation days relevant details were collected in order to prepare a comparative account on the marketing of sharks brought to Tuticorin. Roughly 6.9 tonnes of sharks were auctioned for Rs. 97,242/- during the five months period.

The elasmobranch catch comprised of 6 species of sharks such as 1. *Carcharhinus sorrah* (Spot tail shark), 2. *Carcharhinus longimanus* (Oceanic white tip shark), 3. *Carcharhinus brivipinna*, (Spinner shark), 4. *Carcharhinus limbatus* (Black tip shark), 5. *Carcharhinus melanopterus* (Black tip rear shark) and 6. *Sphyrna lewini* (Scalloped hammer head shark) and one species of Skate *Rhina anchylostoma*. In addition to this, large size fishes like *Epinephelus* spp. and carangids were also brought and auctioned occasionally.

In all, 16 observations were made and the actual catch which was brought to Tuticorin for

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TABLE 1. Particulars of marketing of sharks and skates brought to Tuticorin by vans from Keelakarai (near Mandapam)

Month	Number of observation days	Name of species	Catch in number	Size range in cm	Approximate weight range	Approximate total weight (kg)	Price realised (Rs.)	Total price (Rs.)
January '90	2	<i>C. sorrah</i>	5	215-284	83-130	490	5,522	10,687
		<i>C. longimanus</i>	2	305-340	170-220	390	4,000	
		<i>C. brivipinna</i>	1	270	100	100	1,165	
February '90	4	<i>C. sorrah</i>	25	125-286	8-136	495	7,520	20,215
		<i>C. longimanus</i>	3	285-342	140-220	550	8,045	
		<i>C. melanopterus</i>	2	185-205	45-60	105	2,150	
		<i>C. lewini</i>	1	335	200	200	2,500	
March '90	5	<i>C. sorrah</i>	107	95-140	4-35	1,130	14,040	28,600
		<i>C. melanopterus</i>	3	182-225	40-90	180	3,160	
		<i>C. longimanus</i>	1	320	185	185	3,150	
		<i>C. limbatus</i>	1	242	95	95	1,900	
		<i>Carcharhinus</i> sp.	2	285-355	145-225	365	6,350	
April '90	3	<i>C. sorrah</i>	13	115-248	8-80	455	7,330	18,190
		<i>C. longimanus</i>	2	322-336	145-160	305	5,180	
		<i>C. brivipinna</i>	1	290	140	140	1,680	
		<i>C. melanopterus</i>	1	216	85	85	1,200	
		<i>Carcharhinus</i> sp.	1	312	168	168	2,800	
May '90	2	<i>C. sorrah</i>	46	116-138	8-25	795	11,940	19,550
		<i>C. melanopterus</i>	2	196-238	65-90	155	1,560	
		<i>C. limbatus</i>	2	220-235	80-90	170	2,100	
		<i>R. anchylostoma</i>	2	263-288	160-210	360	3,950	
<b>Total</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>—</b>	<b>223</b>	<b>—</b>	<b>—</b>	<b>6,923</b>	<b>—</b>	<b>97,242</b>

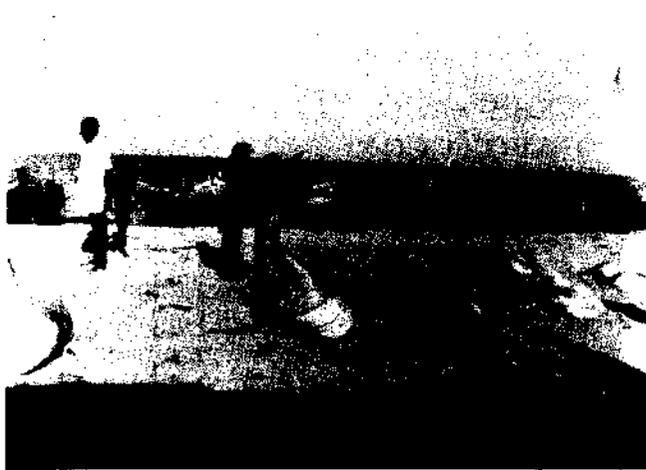


Fig. 1. A view of the landing centre.



Fig. 2. A specimen of *Carcharhinus sorrah*.

TABLE 2. The size measurements of different species of sharks and skates along with the maximum size recorded

Date	Name of the species	Sex	Maximum size TL (cm) present record	Maximum size TL (cm) previous FAO record	Approximate weight (kg)	Price realised (Rs.)
20-01-'90	<i>C. sorrah</i>	Male	260	150	100	1,380
27-01-'90	..	Female	284	to	130	1,420
06-02-'90	..	Female	286	230	136	2,370
22-02-'90	<i>C. longimanus</i>	Female	335		190	2,860
28-02-'90	..	Female	342	350	220	3,200
24-03-'90	..	Female	320	..	185	3,150
22-02-'90	<i>C. melanopterus</i>	Female	205		60	1,470
21-04-'90	..	Male	216	200	85	1,200
05-05-'90	..	Female	238	..	90	1,560
24-03-'90	<i>C. limbatus</i>	Female	242		95	1,900
05-05-'90	..	Female	235	247	90	1,230
20-01-'90	<i>C. brivipinna</i>	Male	270		100	1,165
18-04-'90	..	Female	290	280	140	1,680
20-02-'90	<i>S. lewini</i>	Female	335	420	200	2,500
03-05-'90	<i>R. anchylostoma</i>	Female	288		160	2,250
03-05-'90	..	Male	263	—	100	1,700

auction is presented in Table 1 with the price realised. Along with this, length measurements were also taken to note their size composition in the fishery for comparison with FAO records and presented in Table 2.

From the measurements, it is obviously seen that *Carcharhinus sorrah*, *Carcharhinus melanopterus* and *Carcharhinus brivipinna* were larger in size than the specimens recorded by

FAO (*FAO species identification sheets.... Western Indian Ocean Vol V*). Normally each shark was auctioned individually except the ones which were less than 20 kg. Such small sharks were auctioned collectively. The average rate worked out at Rs. 10/- to Rs. 20/- per kg. The flesh was salted and sent to Kerala. The liver was utilized for extracting oil and the fins were dried for export.