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## ON A SEI WHALE, *BALAENOPTERA BOREALIS* LANDED AT PUTHUVYPU IN VYPEEN ISLAND NEAR COCHIN \*

On 21.9.1991 the fishermen of Puthuvypu near Cochin, seeing a sei whale *Balaenoptera borealis* stranded in shallow water, tied and landed it ashore (Fig. 1 and 2) at the Puthuvypu light house beach. The animal was alive when landed but died soon. The carcass was buried at the beach on fourth day in decayed condition. Fishermen collected the oozing oil and removed the blubber believing them to be excellent remedies for respiratory complaints. A preliminary examination of the intestine did not reveal any solid food material.

The whale measured 9 m in length and was estimated to weigh around 5 tonnes. Some morphometric details in cm are presented below.

Total length from tip of upper jaw to deepest part of the fluke notch	900
Projection of lower jaw beyond upper	11
Flipper length from tip to anterior insertion	110
Baleen plate length	156
Head span	135
Blow hole length	20
Girth at flipper	205
Depth of body at origin of flipper	86
Dorsal fin height	24
Fluke span	220
Length of fluke on outer curvature	306
Baleen plates (No.)	292
Ventral grooves (No.)	52

The first record of sei whale stranding along the Indian coasts was by Venkataraman *et al.* *Indian J. Fish.*, **20** (2) : 634-638, (1973) in Palk Bay. Since then there were two more strandings (Venkataramanujam *et al.* *Invest. Cetexcea*, 21 :

247-249, 1988 and Mohamed Kasim and Balasubramanian (*Mar. Fish. Infor. Serv., T & E Ser.*, No. 95 : 12-14, 1989) at Tuticorin. The present capture, however, is the first report of sei whale from the west coast. The one landed now at Puthuvypu happens to be the smallest of the sei whale so far got in India.



Fig. 1. The sei whale, *Balaenoptera borealis* landed at Puthuvypu on 21-9-1991.



Fig. 2. A view of sei whale showing the baleen plates in upper jaw.

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