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

भारतीय कृषि अनुसंधान परिषद  
INDIAN COUNCIL OF AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH

# **INSTANCES OF WHALE SHARK *RHINEODON TYPUS* SMITH CAUGHT ALONG THE TAMIL NADU COAST \***

In the present report, details of landings of two whale sharks, *Rhineodon typus* Smith from the fish landing centres at Kovalam near Madras and Dhanushkodi near Rameswaram along the Tamil Nadu coast are given.

A female juvenile whale shark of 448 cm in total length caught in live condition in a gill net ('Paichu valai') was landed on 8th October, 1989 at Kovalam fish landing centre about 30 km south of Madras. The second whale shark measuring 556 cm in total length was a male and stranded on 23rd October, 1991 near Dhanushkodi fishing jetty about 18 km south of Rameswaram (Fig. 1). The whale shark was first caught in live condition in a gill net ('Choodal valai') but it managed to escape. Two numbers of the sucker fish, *Echenets naucrates* were attached on one side of the gill slits of the whale shark at the time of stranding. The whale shark was auctioned by the officials of Tamil Nadu State Fisheries Department, Rameswaram. The morphometric measurements of the specimens are given in Table 1.

TABLE 1. Morphometric measurements of whale sharks (in cm)

Date of Catch :	8.10.89	23.10.91
Place of Catch :	Kovalam	Dhanushkodi
Particulars	Measurements	
Total length (tip of snout to tip of caudal fin)	448	556
Tip of snout to origin of first dorsal fin	-	197
Tip of snout to second dorsal fin	-	296
Tip of snout to I gill slit	-	80
Tip of snout to II gill slit	-	90
Tip of snout to III gill slit	-	88
Tip of snout to IV gill slit	-	89
Breadth of snout	60	66

Tip of snout to origin of pectoral fin	-	108
Breadth of pectoral fin	47	50
Length of pectoral fin	75	71
Breadth of first dorsal	-	38
Height of first dorsal	-	52
Breadth of second dorsal	-	20
Tip of snout to anal opening	-	252
Tip of snout to caudal fluke	-	392
Length of upper caudal fluke	-	156
Length of lower caudal fluke	-	57
Maximum height of the body	-	62
Girth of the body at head region	-	256
Approximate weight	2 tonnes	3 tonnes
Sex	Female	Male
Length of clasper	-	12



Fig. 1. Whale shark *Rhineodon typus* Smith landed at Dhanushkodi

\* Reported by : P. Nammalwar, P. Livingston, C. Kasinathan and N. Ramamoorthy, Mandapam Regional Centre of CMFRI, Mandapam Camp - 623 520 and P. Poovannan, Madras Research Centre of CMFRI, Madras - 600 006.