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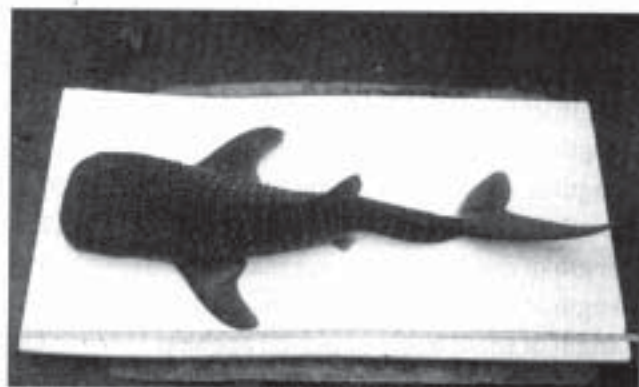
COCHIN, INDIA

(INDIAN COUNCIL OF AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH)

The present report is based on the landing of a juvenile whale shark in live condition entangled in Chala vala (gill net for sardines), on 26-12-2002, at Vizhinjam fish landing centre. The fish was in a condition of stress and shock due to its capture in the net. Since it is included in the IUCN Red list (2000) as species under threat, an effort was made to save it by quickly transporting in a large container with seawater to the Marine Aquarium of Vizhinjam Research Centre of CMFRI, where it was introduced into a three tonne capacity cement tank with strong aeration and filtration system. Eventhough it regained the balance and started moving slowly, it died around 1900 hours on the same day.

The morphometric measurements (in cm) of the whale juvenile shark were as follows :

Total length	97.5
Standard length	73
Head length	24
Girth of the body	14.5
Width of mouth from angle to angle	16
First dorsal fin length	5.5
Second dorsal fin length	3.5



Juvenile whale shark landed at Vizhingam

Anal fin length	2
Length of caudal fin along upper margin	26
Distance from snout to origin of first dorsal	44.5
Distance from snout to origin of second dorsal	59
Distance from snout to origin of pectoral	21
Distance from snout to origin of pelvic	45
Distance from snout to origin of anal	61
Distance between origin of first dorsal to origin of second dorsal	16
Distance between origin of anal to origin of caudal	11.5
Distance between origin of pectoral to origin of pelvic	27
Distance between origin of pelvic to anal origin	13
Length of pectoral along outer margin	18
Length of pectoral fin from angle of inner base to tip	14.5
Length of pelvic fin along outer margin	6
Total weight	5.900 kg.

Sharks, the largest living fish in the oceans have a wide distribution in both tropical and temperate seas. The largest recorded is from the Gulf of Siam, measuring approximately 18 m and the smallest, 55 cm collected from the high seas of eastern Pacific from a depth of 2600 cm. The smallest recorded from Indian waters is 3.15 m and the largest 12.18m. The present report is the smallest (97.5cm) whale shark recorded from Indian coasts.

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