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## ON A MINKE WHALE *BALAENOPTERA ACUTOROSTRATA* CAUGHT OFF KAKINADA COAST\*

In the early morning hours of 4th August, 1985, the Kakinada artisanal gill net fishermen caught a medium sized live male baleen whale at 70 m depth. They towed the whale with the help of two small trawlers into the Kakinada fishing harbour. It was later dragged on to the shore during high tide and was kept on show to the public under a tent erected for the purpose, for the next two days.

The presence of about 50 throat grooves, the small dorsal fin markedly curved backwards and the prominent white band over the flippers suggested that the baleen whale was a minke whale belonging to the species *Balaenoptera*

*acutorostrata* Lacepede. Some of the recent records of the baleen whales in the Indian seas are given in a Table. The following morphometric measurements (in cm) were taken : Total length (from tip of lower jaw to tip of fluke) 631, maximum girth 186 and maximum height 113. The animal was estimated to weigh about 8 tonnes. No injuries were observed on the body of the animal except those inflicted by fishermen by beating it with their wooden oars to control its fury and to mitigate the damage to the net.

As there was no market value to the whale in the locality, it was towed by two small trawlers and was dumped far out at sea,

TABLE 1. Strandings/ capture of baleen whales in the Indian seas in recent years

Sl. No.	Date of stranding/ capture	Place	Species (dead/alive)	Total length of the specimen and sex	Reported by	Reference
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1.	19-7-1959 (Stranded)	Kakinada	<i>Balaenoptera</i> sp. (Alive)	7.82 m	C. Lakshmana Rao	<i>J. mar. biol. Ass. India</i> , 3 (1&2) : 273, (1961)
2.	21-4-1964 (Washed ashore)	Muloor, South Kanara coast	<i>Balaenoptera</i> sp. (Dead)	15.76 m	A. K. Nagabhushanam, M. H. Dhulkhed	<i>J. mar. biol. Ass. India</i> , 6 (2) : 323-325, (1964)
3.	9-10-1965 (Washed ashore)	Bombay coast	<i>B. physalus</i>	15.10 m	J. P. Kharbari, M. Aravi- ndhakshan and K. Pra- bhakaran Nair	<i>J. mar. biol. Ass. India</i> , 8 (1&2) : 226-227, (1966)
4.	25-5-1966	Calicut	<i>B. musculus</i> (Dead)	13.51 m	G. Venkataraman and K. G. Girjvallabhan	<i>J. mar. biol. Ass. India</i> , 8 (1&2) : 373-374, (1966)
5.	5-12-1968 (Stranded)	Mandrem, near Panaji, Goa coast	<i>Balaenoptera</i> sp.	14.80 m	Rajinder, M. Dhawan	<i>J. mar. biol. Ass. India</i> , 14 (1) : 411, (1972)
6.	26-2-1969 (Stranded)	Off Baina, Goa coast	<i>B. physalus</i> (Dead)	14.85 m	Rajinder, M. Dhawan	<i>J. mar. biol. Ass. India</i> , 14 (1) : 410-411, (1972)
7.	13-8-1971 (Stranded)	Off Magdalla near Surat	<i>B. physalus</i>	14.05 m	J. P. Karbhari	<i>Indian J. Fish.</i> , 20 (2) : 639-640, (1973)
8.	23-12-1971 (Stranded)	Manakad near Mandapam camp	<i>B. borealis</i>	15.53 m	G. Venkataraman, K. Dorairaj, M. Devaraj and R. Ganapathi	<i>Indian J. Fish.</i> , 20 (2) : 634-638, (1973)

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1	2	3	4	5	6	7
9.	20-12-1976 (Stranded)	Off Ovari, Gulf of Mannar	<i>B. musculus</i>	6.35 m (Female)	R. Marichamy, M. E. Rajapandian and A. Srinivasan	<i>J. mar. biol. Ass. India</i> , <b>26</b> (1&2) : 168-170, (1984)
10.	31-1-1981	Mallipatnam Tanjavur district	<i>B. borealis</i> (Dead)	9.90 m	P. S. B. R. James and R. Soundararajan	<i>J. mar. biol. Ass. India</i> , <b>22</b> (1&2) : 175, (1980)
11.	18-2-1981 (Stranded)	Periathalai coast	<i>Balaenoptera</i> sp.	11.5 m	Team of scientists	CMFRI Newsletter No. <b>11</b> , January-March 1981, p. 5.
12.	24-4-1981	Off Vizhinjam	<i>Balaenoptera</i> sp. (Alive)	6.25 m	J. J. Joel and Mathew Joseph	CMFRI Newsletter No. <b>12</b> , April-June 1981, p. 6
13.	22-1-1983 (Washed ashore)	Rameswaram Island	<i>B. physalus</i> (Dead)	9.90 m (Female)	P. Nammalwar, S. Krishna Pillai and S. Sankaralingam	<i>Mar. Fish. Infor. Serv.</i> <i>T &amp; E Ser.</i> , No. <b>48</b> : 21, (1983)
14.	18-5-1985 (Washed ashore)	Mallipatinam coast, Tanjore district	<i>Balaenoptera</i> sp. (Dead)	9.30 m	C. Kasinathan	<i>Mar. Fish. Infor. Serv.</i> , <i>T &amp; E Ser.</i> , No. <b>70</b> : 25, (1986)
15.	31-9-1985 (Stranded)	Chappa beach, Narakkal, Cochin	<i>B. musculus</i>	10.30 m (Male)	K. V. Somasekharan Nair and A. A. Jayaprakash	<i>Mar. Fish. Infor. Serv.</i> , <i>T &amp; E Ser.</i> , No. <b>71</b> : 17-18, (1987)
16.	29-4-1987 (Washed ashore)	Hollengade, Karnataka coast	<i>Balaenoptera</i> sp. (Dead)	17 m	K. Y. Telang	<i>Mar. Fish. Infor. Serv.</i> , <i>T &amp; E Ser.</i> , No. <b>78</b> : 17, (1987)
17.	26-2-1988 (Washed ashore)	Tuticorin	<i>B. borealis</i>	12 m Male	Venkataramanujam <i>et al.</i>	<i>Mar. Fish. Infor. Serv.</i> , <i>T &amp; E Ser.</i> , No. <b>95</b> : 13, (1989)
18.	18-5-1988 (Stranded)	Kayalpatnam, Gulf of Mannar coast	<i>B. borealis</i>	10.02 m (Female)	H. Mohamed Kasim and T. S. Balasubramanian	<i>Mar. Fish. Infor. Serv.</i> , <i>T &amp; E Ser.</i> , No. <b>95</b> : 12-14, (1989)
19.	May, 1988 (Stranded)	Tuticorin	<i>B. borealis</i>	7.50 m	Scientific staff of Tuticorin Research Centre of CMFRI	CMFRI Newsletter No. <b>40</b> , April-June 1988, p. 5
20.	June, 1988	Pudumani- kuppam near Madras	<i>B. physalis</i> (Alive)	4.70 m (Female)	Scientific staff of Madras Research Centre of CMFRI	CMFRI Newsletter No. <b>40</b> , April-June 1988, p.5
21.	April-	Bombay	<i>Balaenoptera</i> sp.	9 m	Scientific staff	CMFRI Newsletter No.
22.	June,	and	<i>Balaenoptera</i> sp.	18 m	of Bombay and Veraval	<b>40</b> , April-June,
23.	1988	Gujarat coast (3 Nos.)	<i>Balaenoptera</i> sp.	23 m	Research Centres of CMFRI	1988, p. 5
24.	14-8-1988	Sikka, Off Gulf of Kutch	<i>B. borealis</i> (Dead)	9.76 m (Female)	Scientific staff of Veraval Research Centre of CMFRI	CMFRI Newsletter No. <b>41</b> , July-September, 1988, p. 6
25.	10-12-1988 (Washed ashore)	Motupalli Prakasam distri- ct, Andhra Pradesh	<i>B. musculus</i>	15.16 m (Male)	T. Chandrasekhara Rao and A. Hanumantha Rao	<i>Mar. Fish. Infor. Serv.</i> , <i>T &amp; E Ser.</i> , No. <b>102</b> : 13-16, (1989)
26.	15-3-1989 (Stranded)	Someswara, South Kanara	<i>B. physalis</i>	14.02 m (Female)	G. M. Kulkarni, P. U. Zach- aria, S. Kemparaju, D. Nagaraja, Y. Muniyappa and R. Appayya Naik	<i>Mar. Fish. Infor.</i> <i>TServ.</i> , & <i>E Ser.</i> , No. <b>102</b> : 16, (1989)