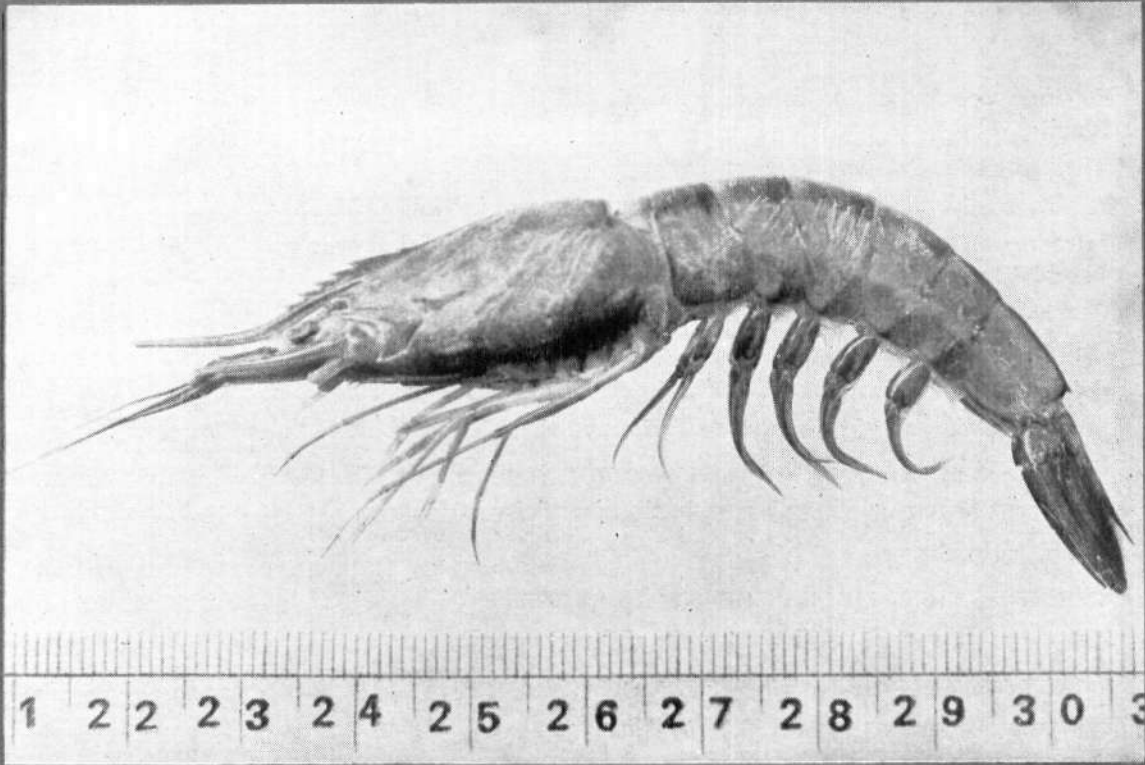




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केन्द्रीय समुद्री मात्स्यकी अनुसंधान संस्थान कोचिन, भारत CENTRAL MARINE FISHERIES RESEARCH INSTITUTE COCHIN, INDIA

भारतीय कृषि अनुसंधान परिषद
INDIAN COUNCIL OF AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH

INSTANCES OF LANDINGS OF WHALE SHARK *RHINEODON TYPUS* IN INDIAN COASTAL WATERS*

In the present account details of landings of whale shark *Rhineodon typus* Smith from the fish landing centres at Injambakkam near Madras, Portonovo and Quilon are given.

Madras

A female immature whale shark of 506 cm in total length (Fig. 1) was landed on 6th March, 1987, five

days after the new moon at Kasimedu fish landing centre of Madras by a mechanised boat operating gill net. The measurements are given in Table 1. Since no bidder came forward to buy the shark, it was thrown back into the sea after two days.

The second one, also a female, 765 cm in total length (Fig. 2) was landed on 14th May, 1989 by trawl net, which was much damaged as a result of fight put up by the shark right from off Mahabalipuram, the

* Reported by P. Devadoss, P. Nammalwar, P.V. Srinivasan and S. Srinivasarangan, Madras Research Centre of CMFRI, Madras.

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

Date of catch:	6-3-87	14-5-89	11-2-89	22-4-75	20-9-74	21-9-74	21-5-75
Place of catch:	Madras	Madras	Injambakkam	Quilon		Portonovo	
Sex	Female	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male
Particulars	Measurements						
Total length	506	765	624	1,450	538	543	562
Distance from snout to eye	23	24	23	113	22	24	26
" " " " I gill slit	82	115	102	240	106	113	96
" " " " V gill slit	120	—	—	270	140	142	153
" " " " origin I dorsal	217	377	288	520	245	250	270
" " " " II dorsal	301	527	400	680	310	320	410
" " " " pectoral	99	155	143	300	117	130	129
" " " " pelvic	208	361	295	—	221	228	—
" " " " cloaca	237	—	—	—	—	—	320
Distance between dorsal bases	52	90	64	160	62	65	67
" " " " eyes	100	143	121	120	—	—	—
Diameter of eye	3	—	—	5	4	4	4
Width of mouth	74	108	93	150	82	88	94
First dorsal base	54	60	42	90	56	58	50
" " " " height	44	83	68	85	46	47	49
Second dorsal base	18	42	23	55	20	23	26
" " " " height	19	29	25	40	19	20	20
Pelvic to tip of caudal fin	258	—	—	—	—	—	—
Pectoral base	53	67	55	125	55	57	58
" " " " length	87	120	98	180	98	99	106
Length of upper caudal	117	172	141	260	143	146	148
" " " " lower caudal	80	—	—	—	93	94	92
Length of claspers	—	—	47	—	22	—	23



Fig. 1. Whale shark 506 cm in total length landed on 6-3-'87 Kasimedu.



Fig. 2. Whale shark 765 cm in total length landed on 14-5-'89 at Madras.

place of catch, upto the landing centre. This was also not sold for want of demand and was thrown into the sea. The morphometric measurements are given in Table 1.

Injambakkam

A male shark measuring 624 cm in total length was landed at Injambakkam about 10 km from the southern city limit of Madras on 11-2-1989. It was caught in

gill net and was alive for two hours after landing. As there was no bidder for this also, it was given a burial after two days by the Department of Fisheries, Government of Tamilnadu. The morphometric measurements are given in Table 1.

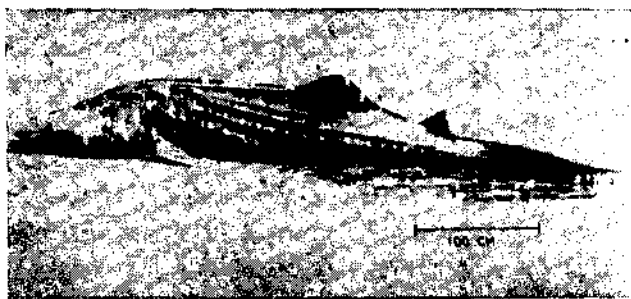


Fig. 3. Whale shark 538 cm in total length landed on 20-9-'74 at Portonovo.

Portonovo

While two sharks were landed on 20th (Fig. 3) and 21st September, 1974 the third one was caught on 21st May, 1975. The proportional dimensions of all the three sharks are given in Table 1. Of these, one was a female and the other two were males. All of them got entangled in the gill nets operated from

catamarans in 30-40 m depth off Portonovo. The first one was auctioned for Rs. 200/- and was sliced and sent to market to be sold fresh. As the demand for the meat was less the subsequent two specimens were thrown back into the sea.

Quilon

A female whale shark measuring 1,450 cm, the largest so far recorded, was caught in a drift net operated by a mechanised vessel 40 km off Quilon on 22nd April, 1975. The fish was auctioned for Rs. 500. The stomach and intestine were practically empty except for some greenish scum. The liver weighed 400 kg while the oil extracted from it was only 150 kg. The measurements taken are presented in Table 1.

There was yet another report from the Field Centre of CMFRI, Cuddalore on a whale shark landed on 9-1-1987 measuring 450 cm. The information was received very late and the specimen was thrown in the sea as no one came forward to buy it. The low quantity and poor nutritional value of the meat and the absence of good markets make it highly unlikely that this species will be hunted like some others in the sea. So there is no danger of its extinction at present.

