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ON THE DRIFT NET-ENTANGLED DOLPHINS LANDED AT SAKTHIKULANGARA *

The common dolphin, *Delphinus delphis* is the species frequently entangled in the gill nets along the Indian coast. According to a recent report, about 30 - 40 dolphins are caught annually along the Calicut coast though definite statistics is not available.

The present report details the landings of the common dolphins entangled during the drift gill net operations off Quilon. The landing data on the dolphins were collected during the routine observations on fish landings at Sakthikulangara during the period 1982 - '87. Table 1 gives the monthwise particulars on the dolphin landings. The study reveals that maximum entanglements were recorded during the June - October period. Maximum incidence of dolphins was noted during 1982 - '85 period in terms of observed weight. During the entire period, the observed weight of the dolphins recorded exceeded 2 tonnes and an approximate number of 145 dolphins

were encountered.

The dolphin landings at Sakthikulangara deserves special attention due to the fact that they are utilised for human consumption. Generally, the dolphins entangled in the nets are brought along with fishes and are auctioned separately in the landing centre. It is observed that smaller dolphins which weigh approximately below 15 - 20 kg are preferred for consumption due to its tender meat, whereas the meat of bigger and older specimens is mainly used as baits in the hooks and line fishery for sharks.

It appears that Sakthikulangara is the only centre along the Kerala coast where dolphins are used for human consumption and are sold in fish markets. The above observations are considered important when the marine mammals of the Indian seas including dolphins are attracting special attention in recent years.

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TABLE 1. Particulars of dolphin landings at Sakthikulangara during 1982 - '87

Months	Years							
	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987		
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
January	1	-	-	8	-	-	-	-
	2	-	-	2	-	-	-	-
	3	-	-	60	-	-	-	-
February	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
March	1	-	-	8	-	-	-	-
	2	-	-	1	-	-	-	-
	3	-	-	27	-	-	-	-
April	1	10	9	7	8	-	-	-
	2	4	4	3	2	-	-	-
	3	110	87	61	61	-	-	-

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
May	1	10	10	-	-	9	9
	2	2	1	-	-	1	1
	3	41	13	-	-	47	39
June	1	14	-	10	7	10	10
	2	1	-	3	1	1	1
	3	28	-	70	21	46	48
July	1	22	9	-	20	-	20
	2	1	3	-	3	-	1
	3	24	68	-	169	-	33
August	1	10	20	10	14	18	19
	2	1	3	1	1	1	1
	3	33	124	26	37	20	22
September	1	17	19	1	12	-	18
	2	4	2	2	5	-	1
	3	168	31	71	173	-	25
October	1	10	8	8	8	9	7
	2	2	2	2	1	1	2
	3	72	59	38	17	24	45
November	1	-	9	7	8	-	-
	2	-	1	1	1	-	-
	3	-	56	26	38	-	-
December	1	-	-	-	-	9	-
	2	-	-	-	-	1	-
	3	-	-	-	-	26	-

1. Number of observation days.
2. Number of days in which dolphins were landed.
3. Observed weight of dolphin in kg.