

# Juvenile whale shark, *Rhincodon typus* stranded at Ayikkara, along the Malabar coast of Kerala

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A female whale shark, *Rhincodon typus* measuring 475 cm in length and approximately 800 kg in weight was stranded near Ayikkara Fisheries Harbour in Kannur District on 25<sup>th</sup> November 2011. Whale shark is locally called as “pullisravu” and the stranding of this species is not common in shallow waters along the Malabar region. Whale shark is listed as an endangered species as per the IUCN Red List.

The shark was alive when it was stranded on the shore. There were no injuries or wounds noticed on the body of the shark. It is assumed that the whale shark was accidentally entangled in a drift gillnet set



Whale shark *Rhincodon typus*, stranded at Ayikkara

Morphometric measurements of whale shark stranded at Ayikkara

Parameters	Measurements (cm)
Total length	475
Fork length	424
Pre-caudal length	364
Pre-first dorsal length	197
Pre-second dorsal length	288
Head length	131
Pre-branchial length	71
Pre-piracular length	61
Pre-orbital length	40
Pre-pectoral length	106
Pre-pelvic length	222
Snout vent length	258
Pre-anal length	288
Inter-dorsal space	116
Dorsal-caudal space	61
Pectoral-pelvic space	81
Pelvic-anal space	45
Anal-caudal space	61
Vent-caudal length	192
Pectoral length	96
Pectoral base	35
First dorsal length	51
First dorsal base	40
Second dorsal length	20
Second dorsal base	15
Dorsal-caudal margin	111

Ventral length	30
Ventral width	20
Ventral-caudal margin	40
Anal length	20
Anal width	13
Width of mouth	51
Total weight	800 kg

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near Ayikkara on the previous day evening. Though the stranded whale shark was dragged into the sea with the help of the local fishermen and NGO's, it died while being rescued. Later on, the carcass was stranded in the Ayikkara beach on the same day evening. The fishermen towed it to deeper waters with the help of two boats and discarded the carcass.