

Heavy landings of the shortfin mako shark, *Isurus oxyrinchus* at Cochin Fisheries Harbour

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During January - February 2013, heavy landings of the shortfin mako shark *Isurus oxyrinchus* (Family: Lamnidae) by multiday gillnet-hooks and line units were observed at Cochin Fisheries harbour (CFH) (Fig. 1a & b). *I. oxyrinchus* is generally seen in the landings by gillnet-hooks and line units (operated off the west coast of India extending from Kerala to Gujarat coasts) at CFH, but in small numbers of larger specimens. The start of 2013 fishing season witnessed heavy landings of this species, of a wide size range (100 – 220 cm total length; 7 – 75 kg weight), dominating the shark landings at CFH second to *Carcharhinus falciformis* on certain days. The length-frequency distribution as well as detailed biological aspects of this species is currently being studied as part of the Institute research project on “Assessment of elasmobranch resources of Indian Seas”.

The shortfin mako is a fairly large species of shark, an average adult specimen measuring around 3.2 m in length and 60–135 kg in weight, with females being larger than males. The body is brilliant metallic blue

dorsally and white ventrally, with distinct line of demarcation between blue and white on the body. The shortfin mako inhabits offshore temperate and tropical seas worldwide. It is a pelagic species that can be found from the surface down to depths of 150 m, normally far from land, though occasionally seen closer to shore around islands or inlets. The shortfin mako is the fastest species of shark and is highly migratory.

I. oxyrinchus feeds mainly on cephalopods, bony fishes including mackerels, tunas, swordfish and may also eat other sharks, porpoises, sea turtles, and seabirds. This is an ovoviviparous shark species, giving birth to live young ones. The species is listed as Vulnerable in the IUCN Red list. In 2010, Greenpeace International added the shortfin mako shark to its seafood red list, a list of fish that are commonly sold in supermarkets around the world, and which have a very high risk of being sourced from unsustainable fisheries. In 2010, the Convention on Migratory Species (CMS) also added the shortfin mako shark to Annex I of its Migratory Sharks MoU.



Fig. 1a & b. *Isurus oxyrinchus* landed at Cochin Fisheries Harbour