

Largest black marlin, *Istiompax indica* (Cuvier, 1832) landed at Tharuvaikulam, Tuticorin

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Black marlin is a highly migratory, large oceanic apex predator that inhabits tropical and subtropical waters of the Indian and Pacific oceans. Little is

known on the biology of black marlin in the Indian Ocean. In the present observation, a black marlin landed on 25.3.2013 by drift gill net operated from

Tharuvaikulam landing centre is reported. The fishing was conducted off Mandapam at a depth beyond 300 m. There is a regular landing of black marlin by drift gill net here which are actually entangled and not gilled. The fish measured 422 cm total length, 344 cm body length or Lower jaw fork length (LJFL) and 292 cm Eye-Fork length (EFL). Other size groups landed on the same day had LJFL and EFL as: 217 cm, 183 cm; 280 cm, 245 cm; 223 cm, 200 cm and 230 cm, 197 cm respectively.

In the Indian Ocean, documented maximum size for females is 306 cm LJFL and for males, it is 280 cm LJFL (IOTC-2012-SC15-20(E)). The size range of black marlin taken by commercial long line fisheries is 150 to 310 cm (mostly 170 to 210 cm) LJFL in the



western Indian Ocean and 170 to 310 cm (mostly 185 to 240 cm) LJFL in the Coral Sea (FAO Fisheries synopsis No.125, Vol.5. Bill fishes of the world). It can be seen that the present specimen is larger than the recorded sizes from elsewhere.