

Occurrence of near threatened tiger shark, *Galeocerdo cuvier* (Peron and Lesueur, 1822) from Tutcorin Coast, Tamil Nadu

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The Tiger shark *Galeocerdo cuvier* belonging to the Carcharhinidae family contains 12 genera and 54 valid species. The genus *Galeocerdo* represents a single species *G. cuvier*. It is a large semi-coastal-oceanic species, which populates temperate and tropical waters (Compagno, 2005). Tiger sharks feeds on sea turtles, dugongs, teleost fishes, sea snakes, sea birds, jellyfishes, rays, marine mammals and crabs and is considered as an apex predator in the marine ecosystem.

On 22nd January, 2013 a single female specimen of *G. cuvier* measuring 136 cm (total length) with a weight of 13 kg was landed which was accidentally caught by Hook and Line, (locally called as Thoondil) operated from traditional fishing craft (Vallam) at Punnakayal landing centre. The gear was operated between 50 and 150 m depth, at a distance of 40 to 50 Nautical miles from the coast. For identification, photographs of the landed specimen were taken and basic measurements like total length, weight, sex and some special characters were noted.

Diagnostic characters

Body fusiform, stout forward of the first dorsal fin, snout very short and bluntly rounded. Upper labial furrows long reaching the eyes, teeth coarsely serrated, interdorsal ridge present, caudal peduncle relatively narrow. Second dorsal much smaller than first. Keel on each side caudal peduncle. Upper caudal lobe with long tapering tip (Fig. 1). Colour: Grey above with vertical black to dark grey tiger stripe and spots marking on side and fins.

Threats and protection

Tiger sharks are under the “near threatened” category in the IUCN red list and it is not usually



Fig. 1. A view of *Galeocerdo cuvieri* incidentally caught by Hook and Line



Fig. 2. Ventral view of *G. cuvier* showing serrated teeth



Fig. 3. Ventral view of *G. cuvier* showing absence of claspers between the pelvic fins



Fig. 4. A view of 1st and 2nd dorsal fins & upper caudal lobe with long tapering tip

fished commercially but previously it has been targeted for the fins, liver and jaws (Randall, 1992; Simpfendorfer, 2005). The tiger shark is also one of the seven species for which there is a sport fishing world record, the biggest one being a 569 kg individual caught in Queensland in 1953. Next to the great white shark, *Carcharodon carcharias*, it is the most dangerous shark in the frequency of attack on humans in the ocean (Randall, 1992).