

Rare landing of Indian mottled eel, *Anguilla bengalensis* (Gray, 1831) from coastal waters of Karwar

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A large sized freshwater eel, locally called 'hemmalaga' in Kannada and 'kadai' in Konkani was landed by shore-seine (Yendi) on 26-07-2013 at Aligadda landing centre in Karwar. The fish was caught live and was observed to be very active. The specimen was identified as Indian mottled eel, *Anguilla bengalensis* (Gray, 1831) of family *Anguillidae*. The specimen was an adult female with a total length of 142 cm and weight of 6.82 kg. Other morphometric measurements recorded were as follows: The dorsal fin length (96 cm), anal fin length (78.5 cm), pectoral fin length (11.5 cm), girth (32.5 cm), head length (29 cm) and head width (18 cm). The specimen appears to be the largest record of *Anguilla bengalensis* caught in the Indian coastal waters. The maximum reported length and weight of this species published in FishBase' is 200 cm and 6 kg. A total length of 120 cm for this species is reported by Menon *et al* (1998). Although the length of the present specimen is only 142 cm the weight seems to be the maximum reported so far.



Fig. 1. The rare large size Indian mottled eel, *Anguilla bengalensis bengalensis* (Gray, 1831) landed at Aligadda beach, Karwar in shore seine

During the week prior to the capture of the eel there was incessant rain in Karwar and in the upper reaches of river Kali. On the previous day the crest gates of Kadra dam was opened and there was a massive influx of fresh water into the Bay. Hence it is assumed that this *Anguilla* species which normally breed in sea while elvers migrate upstream into the freshwater areas of the river for their growth phase came to the sea for breeding. The fish was purchased by the local dealers for selling it in the interior markets where good demand exists for it. The fish which was earlier observed in the monsoon fishery nowadays have disappeared and the reason was attributed to the poor monsoon and damming of the river.