

## A note on the oceanic Sharp-tail mola landed

On 14<sup>th</sup> June 2024, an ocean sharp-tail mola (*Masturus lanceolatus*) was landed at Kollam Fisheries Harbour. The fish was entangled in 40 mm gillnet operated from a motorized fibre boat fitted with a 20 hp engine, at a depth of approximately 40 meters. The specimen had an approximate total weight of 40 kg and total length 85 cm. It was grey in colour and similar in appearance to the ocean sunfish (*Mola mola*) but could be differentiated by the projection on its clavus (pseudo-tail). Other common names for this fish include Sharpfin mola fish and Point-tailed mola fish. Rarely encountered, very little is known of the biology or life history of the sharptail mola. This species is the only member of its genus covered with extremely thick, and the extensive fat deposits under the skin observed in the present case is to probably help the fish to resist extreme cold temperature of the deep-



sea habitat it occupies. Sharp-tail mola meat is considered a delicacy in Japan, but it's not commonly consumed in India. The preference for other seafood and the rare mola fish landings may be

the reason for this limited commercial importance in the region.

**Ullas Shankar\*, Paulose Jacob Peter, Somy Kuriakose and J. Jayasankar** | ICAR-Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute, Kochi