

Report on the Silky shark landings in Odisha



Silky sharks are large bodied highly migratory, coastal-pelagic and oceanic requiem sharks which occur circumglobally in a depth range of 18-500m. They are known to be associated

with islands, near insular slopes and over deepwater reefs preferring a water temperature of 23°C. Silky sharks form a good fishery along southwest coast of India and mostly appear as bycatch

in tuna fisheries. The landing of Silky sharks is fewer in the east coast of India. The landing of Silky shark from east coast was first recorded from Tamil Nadu (Kasimedu Fishing Harbour) in 2012 and later from Andhra Pradesh (Visakhapatnam Fishing Harbour) in 2013. Hitherto, there is no record of its landing available from the Odisha coast. In Odisha, there were two instances of landings of Silky shark during 2023 in Paradeep which was the first record of the species from the north- eastern coast. On 12th July 2023, a mature female specimen of *C. falciformis* measuring a 182 cm TL weighing approximately 60 kg was found to be landed on the beach. After conversation with the fishermen, it was noted that the fish might have caught and was discarded in fear of protected species catch as the local

fishermen did not have any idea of the species because of the first time landing. The size at maturity for Silky sharks was reported as 180-230 cm TL for males and 180-246 cm TL for females (Clarke *et al.*, 2015). Later on 7th October, 2023 a female juvenile Silky shark was landed in Paradeep Fishing Harbour measuring a total length (TL) of 124 cm and weighed 25 kg caught off Paradeep (south-east i.e., Gopalpur fishing ground), Ganjam, Odisha by a trawler operating at a depth of 40 m in the Bay of Bengal and was auctioned at a rate ₹200/kg. Generally, Silky sharks are known to be captured incidentally by tuna and swordfish line fisheries. In Indian waters they form a secondary (retained) catch

in drift gillnet and longline fisheries targeting large pelagics, and to a lesser extent as bycatch by trawlers. They are the threatened groups due to the soaring demand for their fins and listed as 'vulnerable' in the IUCN red list category (Rigby *et. al.*, 2021). Silky shark is listed on the Convention on Migratory Species (CMS) Appendix II, and on Annex 1 of the Memorandum of Understanding on the Conservation of Migratory Sharks. In India, Silky sharks are managed by Marine Fisheries Regulation Acts of states (MFRA) and the National Marine Fisheries Policy of the country. Considering the low productivity, high market demand and vulnerability of Silky sharks recently

in 2019, ICAR-CMFRI has brought the Silky shark (*Carcharhinus falciformis*) NDF (Non-detriment findings) for India. The study indicates that the outcome for the newly-listed species is 'positive with conditions,' allowing the trade of non-fin commodities to continue. However, it is dependent upon the implementation of enhancements to current fisheries, trade management, and monitoring frameworks, coupled with the integration of research and management measures. A reassessment of the species' status is recommended after a period of three years.

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