

Plastic entangled juvenile Silky shark landed



The proliferation of anthropogenic debris, predominantly plastic, in the marine environment is a growing concern. While marine fish entanglement in such debris is widely reported, documentation of similar incidents involving sharks remains remarkably limited globally. Common items causing entanglement include discarded fishing lines, nets, ropes, plastic bands, and packaging straps. When these wound around the shark's fins, gills, or body, it leads to physical injuries causing restricted movement, impaired feeding, and in severe cases, death.

On 18th March 2025, a juvenile male Silky shark *Carcharhinus falciformis* entangled in plastic debris

was recorded in the landings at Cochin Fisheries Harbour. The shark measuring 95 cm in total length was caught in a gillnet operated by a multiday fishing vessel at a depth of 2050 meters, off the coast of Kollam (8° 15'00 N and 69° 30' 00 E), Kerala. A hard, round plastic object, 37.5 cm in diameter, was deeply embedded just behind its head, causing a significant wound and had probably become entangled for several days. The object seems to be a washer cap. Juvenile sharks and smaller species are more susceptible to serious injury due to their thinner skin and smaller size. Entanglement often goes unnoticed in the wild, but when observed in captured

specimens is usually evident through scarring or deep lesions around the affected area

N. Ragesh*, S. Pakkri Muthu, T. R. Kaushik, T. B. Retheesh, L. Remya, T. M. Najmudeen and Shoba Joe Kizhakudan | ICAR-Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute, Kochi, Kerala