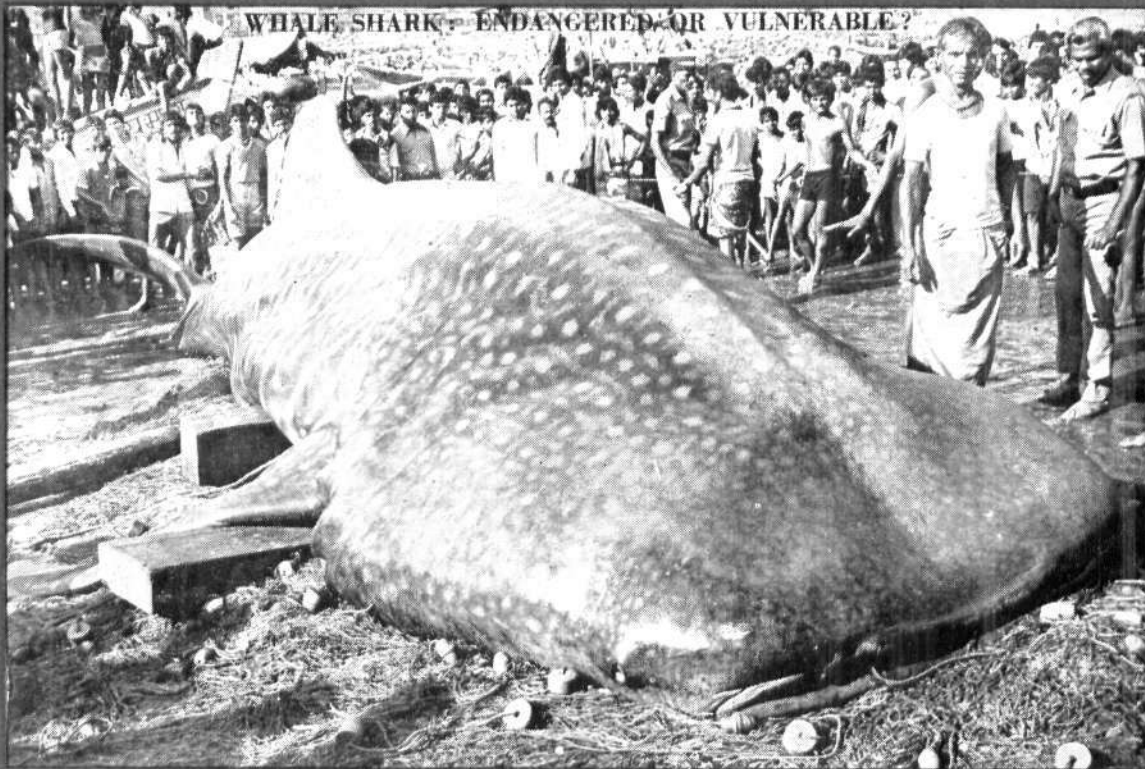




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THE MARINE FISHERIES INFORMATION SERVICE: Technical and Extension Series envisages the rapid dissemination of information on marine and brackish water fishery resources and allied data available with the National Marine Living Resources Data Centre (NMLRDC) and the Research Divisions of the Institute, results of proven researches for transfer of technology to the fish farmers and industry and of other relevant information needed for Research and Development efforts in the marine fisheries sector.

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NOTE ON THE OCCURRENCE OF THE WHALE SHARK *RHINCODON TYPUS* SMITH OFF VERAVAL COAST*

In the course of observations at the trawler landing centre (Bhidiya) at Veraval, the author observed the landing of nine specimens of the whale shark, *Rhincodon typus* Smith on 12-4-1982. On enquiry it was found that the sharks were not caught by accident in the nets but were hunted. The sharks were caught by manually throwing heavy hooks (similar to harpooning). As soon as the hook penetrated into the body of the shark it was towed to the harbour in live condition. At the harbour the abdomen was cut open and the liver was removed. After removing the liver the carcass was towed back into the sea as the flesh had no demand in the local markets. The oil is generally used for painting boats and other wooden fishing appliances.

It was not possible to take any morphometric measurements of the specimens as there was no way of bringing the fish to the warf. Only one specimen of 950 cm in total length could be measured which yielded about

500 kg of liver. It is generally believed that the liver of these sharks formed about 10% of the total body weight. On this basis the weight of this shark was estimated at five tonnes. All the nine sharks landed on 12-4-'82 were of the same size or slightly smaller (ranging in total length from 900-950 cm). Landing of whale sharks was also observed on 13-4-'82 (7 Nos.), 14-4-'82 (4 Nos.) and 15-4-'82 (2 Nos.). Thus during a period of four days, landing of a total of 22 sharks could be observed. However, enquiries with the fishermen indicated landing of 40 Nos. of these sharks during this period. Fishermen further informed that a number of these sharks were sighted in the sea during the period from 10-4-'82 to 15-4-'82. It was also gathered that whale shark is a regular visitor of this coast during April and the fishermen who are in need of the oil, hunt them during this period. The present observation is significant in that about 40 numbers of these sharks were caught in just four days.

In the present instance no data on the biology could be collected as there was no way of bringing the specimen out of water.

*Reported by G. Sudhakara Rao, Veraval Research Centre of CMFRI, Veraval.

