

**A NOTE ON THE WHALE SHARK, *RHINCODON TYPUS* SMITH NETTED
OFF MANAPAD**

ABSTRACT

The capture of a 540 cm male whale shark on 2-2-1973 off Manapad, Gulf of Mannar is recorded here with measurements of body proportion.

ON 2. 2. 1973 at about 4 P.M. a male whale shark was entangled in a nylon gill net which was operated by the fishermen about 6-7 miles off Manapad at a depth of 20-24 metres, and the shark was dragged to the shore. The last reported catch of a whale shark off Tirunelveli Coast was when a whale shark measuring 5.9 m in length was caught in the net off Tiruchendur and towed to Tuticorin (Pai and Mahadevan Pillai, 1970). Prior to that, a female whale shark measuring 5.6 m in total length entangled in the net was towed to Tuticorin (Silas and Rajagopalan, 1963). In 1953 a whale shark over 7 m in length was sighted on Tholayiram Paar (Chacko and Mathew, 1954). Observations of similar catches of whale sharks all along the southern coasts are not uncommon and they are invariably caught by accident in the fishing nets (Kaikini *et al.*, 1959; Gopalan, 1962; and Thomas and Kartha, 1964).

The measurements (in cm) of the specimen caught off Manapad are given below:--

Total length	.. 540	Interspace between:	
Standard length	.. 420	First and second dorsals	.. 60.5
Head length	.. 140	Pelvic and anal origins	.. 110
Girth of Body (maximum)	.. 240	Pectoral and Pelvic origins	.. 150
Width of mouth (angle to angle)	.. 61		
Vertical height of:		Length of Pectoral fin along	
First dorsal fin	.. 40	outer margin from anterior	
Second dorsal fin	.. 21	insertion.	.. 100
Length of caudal fin from		Length of Pectoral fin from	
caudal pit along upper margin	.. 120	angle of inner base to tip	.. 85
Snout to:		Maximum width of Pectoral fin	.. 40
First dorsal fin	.. 230	Length of First dorsal fin	.. 55
Second dorsal fin	.. 290.5	Length of Second dorsal fin.	.. 20.5
Pectoral fin	.. 130	Least height of caudal peduncle	.. 17.5
Pelvic fin	.. 280		
Anal fin	.. 370	Anterior margin of snout to	
		Eye	.. 50
		First gill opening.	.. 100

The liver which was removed from the shark weighed 47 Kgs but yielded only $\frac{1}{2}$ Kg of poor quality oil. The shark was sold for Rs. 45/- and was taken to Odangudi for exhibition. After exhibiting it for a few days the carcass was finally buried for manure.

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