

Stranding of Indo-Pacific Humpback dolphin in Calani Creek

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A Humpback dolphin, *Sousa chinensis* was found dead in Calani Creek, Thrissur district of Kerala on 12.12.2018. The female dolphin measured 265 cm in total length and weighed approximately 300 kg (Fig.1.). The other measurements are given in Table.1. Local fishermen found the dolphin in the early morning about three kilometers inside the creek from the creek mouth and reported the same to the authors who reached the site for documentation and records. Measurements recorded (in cm) were as follows Beak length-27; Length from tip of snout to origin of dorsal fin-107; Tail width-107; Tail length-24; Length of flipper-33; Girth at the level of origin of dorsal fin-164.

After some time a veterinary surgeon from the forest department conducted post mortem on the carcass and

collected samples of the internal organs to ascertain the cause of death. Later the carcass was disposed away by the forest department officials. Various reasons have been attributed to the stranding of marine mammals. Among them is the disorientation of the mammals caused by failed echolocation capability when they enter shallow waters in pursuit of fish schools for foraging. However, their mortality is attributed to the psychological panic and exhaustion due to physical strain in trying to get away from shallow water. In all probability this dolphin might have entered the Calani Creek for food during high tide and would have got stranded during low tide. Moreover, since gill nets are operated across the creek, attempts to escape during low tide might also have been in vain.