

Brief Communications

Report on a stranded sea cow, *Dugong dugon* in the Gulf of Mannar coast

M. Sakthivel¹, A. Devaki², G. Tamilmani¹, P. Rameshkumar¹, K. K. Anikuttan¹, M. Sankar¹ and R. Jayakumar¹

¹Mandapam Regional Centre of ICAR-Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute, Mandapam Camp-623 520, Tamil Nadu

²Veterinary Asst. Surgeon, Dept. of Animal Husbandry, Govt. of Tamil Nadu

On 31 March 2019, an adult dead female sea cow (*Dugong dugon*) measuring more than three meters of total length got stranded along the Gulf of Mannar coast at Gandhi Nagar, Mandapam, Ramanathapuram district, Tamil Nadu (09° 27' 6658" N; 79° 15' 0459" E). The morphometric details of the female whale that was weighing approximately 350 kg is given in Table 1. The specimen had relatively robust body with loss of almost one third of the ventral skin along with blubber from the thoracic and abdominal region of the body. There were significant cut wounds present on the dorsal as well as lateral sides of the body. The internal organs did not reveal any significant abnormalities for the cause of death. Based on the body condition and external injuries it can be concluded that the cause of death might be due to attempted hunting. Dugongs fall in schedule 1 of the Indian Wildlife (Protection) Act whose hunting is banned and poachers are liable for punishment.



Fig.4. Necropsy performed on stranded sea cow

Table 1: Morphometric details of the sea cow washed ashore at Mandapam, Tamil Nadu

Morphometric parameters	Measurement (cm)
Tip of snout to fluke notch	344
Tip of snout to center of anus	246
Tip of snout to center of genital aperture	230
Tip of snout to center of umbilicus	191
Tip of snout to anterior insertion of flipper	81
Tip of snout to center of eye	42
Tip of snout to external ear	54
Center of eye to ear	12
Distance between centers of eyes	36
Center of eye to center of nostril (same side)	23
Flipper length, anterior insertion to tip	60
Flipper length, axilla to tip	45
Maximum width of flipper	30
Girth at umbilicus	216
Girth at axilla	163
Length, Muzzle (anterio-posterior)	26
Breadth, Muzzle (lateral)	24
Length, Chin	17
Breadth, Chin	20