



MARINE FISHERIES INFORMATION SERVICE



No.71

January, February, March
1987

Technical and Extension Series

CENTRAL MARINE FISHERIES RESEARCH INSTITUTE
COCHIN, INDIA

INDIAN COUNCIL OF AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH



ON A BLUE WHALE *BALAENOPTERA MUSCULUS* STRANDED AT CHAPPA BEACH, NARAKKAL, COCHIN, SOUTHWEST COAST OF INDIA*

The news about the stranding of a whale at Chappa beach, Narakkal was received on 2-9-1985 and an immediate visit to the landing centre was made for further observations and studies. Local enquiries revealed that the carcass was noticed by the fishermen on 31-9-1985 itself. The whale, which was a male

was in an advanced state of decomposition. The abdomen was split open and the entire visceral organs were protruding out. The lower jaw was found missing. The blubber over the body was cut and removed by local people and fishermen, as it is believed that the fat in the blubber is a good cure for asthma and other bronchial diseases. The characteristic whale bone was found missing.

*Prepared by K.V. Somasekharan Nair and A.A. Jayaprakash,
Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute, Cochin.

The specimen was identified as a rorqual belonging to the genus *Balaenoptera*. The body was long and slender with a short and flat head. The presence of deep ventral grooves in the skin of the throat and chest extending upto the umbilicus and the ratio of the flipper length to the total length of the species (1:7.7) indicated



Fig. 1. Dorso-lateral view of the Blue whale *Balaenoptera musculus* (Linnaeus) stranded at Narakkal, Cochin.

that the whale could be *Balaenoptera musculus* (Linnaeus). The morphometric measurements of the whale taken are given in Table 1.

Table 1. Measurements of the Blue whale *Balaenoptera musculus* stranded at Narakkal, Cochin

Body parts measured	Length (cm)
Total length (snout to caudal fluke)	1,030
Tip of snout to centre of eye	201
Tip of upper jaw to anterior insertion of flipper	175
Tip of upper jaw to origin of dorsal fin	518
Distance between centre of eye and cleft of mouth	61
Length of flipper	133
Distance between extremities of caudal flukes	138
Length of upper jaw	170
Body diameter at the anterior side of the flipper	498
Anterio-posterior length of eye slit	15
Dorso-ventral diameter of eye	7
Approximate weight	6 tonnes

