

# First record of the chimaeroid, *Rhinochimaera atlantica* at Kasimedu Fisheries Harbour, Chennai

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Chimaeras are shark like fishes having large head and elongated body that taper to a whip-like tail. They come under the subclass Holocephali, characterised by the fusion of the upper jaw to the cranium and absence of scales. Unlike sharks and rays (Elasmobranchii), chimaeras have only 4 pairs of gill openings which are hidden by a pair of soft gill covers, that extend to the base of the pectoral fins and a single external gill opening on each side of the head (Table 1). On 21-01-2010, a female long nose chimaeroid, *Rhinochimaera atlantica*, measuring 150 cm and weighing 8 kg was landed at Kasimedu Fisheries Harbour, Chennai which was caught from a depth of 50-80 m by mechanised gillnet (Fig. 1 and 2).

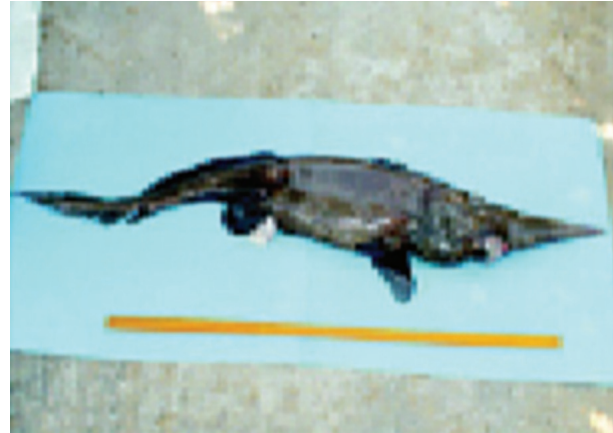


Fig.1. *Rhinochimaera atlantica* landed at Kasimedu Fisheries Harbour

Table 1. Morphometric measurements (cm) of *Rhinochimaera atlantica* landed at Kasimedu Fisheries Harbour, Chennai

Total length	150	2 <sup>nd</sup> dorsal inner margin	1
Standard length	121	Pelvic fin anterior margin	12
Snout to origin of 1 <sup>st</sup> dorsal	71	Pelvic fin posterior margin	6
Snout to origin of pectoral	48	Pelvic fin inner margin	1
Snout to origin of anal	110	Anal fin anterior margin	8
Snout to origin of head	47	Anal fin posterior margin	6
Snout to origin of eye	3.2	Anal fin inner margin	1
1 <sup>st</sup> dorsal anterior margin	9	Length of upper caudal fin	26
1 <sup>st</sup> dorsal posterior margin	9	Length of lower caudal fin	33
1 <sup>st</sup> dorsal inner margin	1	Weight	8 kg
2 <sup>nd</sup> dorsal anterior margin	4	Sex	F
2 <sup>nd</sup> dorsal posterior margin	43		

The specimen was a mature female with four numbers of ripe oocytes, measuring 6 cm in diameter. Stomach was full and contents were in semi-digested condition. Other than the report on occurrence of two chimaeroid egg capsules off Tuticorin, Gulf of Mannar from commercial deepsea catch at a depth of 250-400 m (Arumugam *et al.*, 1990), this is the first report on the landing of chimaeroid from south-east coast of India.



Fig. 2. Digestive system of the female chimaeroid, *R. atlantica* landed at Kasimedu Fisheries Harbour