

First record of tawny nurse shark, *Nebrius ferrugineus* (Lesson, 1830) from the north-west coast of India

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Sharks contribute about 2% towards the total marine fish landings in India and are fished mainly by hooks and lines. They are also caught by gillnets, trawls and purse seines as bycatch. Sharks are widely hunted for flesh, liver oil and fins which are mostly exported to south-east Asia. The species composition of sharks in Maharashtra comprised of *Scoliodon laticaudus* (86.2%), *Rhizoprionodon oligolinx* (3.9%), *Rhizoprionodon acutus* (0.7%), *Carcharhinus sorrah* (2.2%), *Carcharhinus limbatus* (1%), *Carcharhinus macroti* (0.1%), *Lamiopsis temminkie* (2.6%), *Sphyrna lewini* (2.2%) and *Galeocerdo cuvier* (0.7%).

On 05-12-2010, a female shark measuring 3.2 m in total length and weighing approximately 42 kg was caught by a multiday trawler from a depth of 45-65 m and was landed at New Ferry Wharf (Fig. 1). The auction that followed realised an amount of ₹ 22,000/- at the landing centre. The specimen was identified as *Nebrius ferrugineus* (Lesson, 1830). It is commonly known as 'tawny nurse shark' which belong to the order Orectolobiformes, family Ginglymostomatidae and is the only extant member of the genus *Nebrius*. The present observation is the first record of this species from the north-west coast of India.

The specimen has a robust, cylindrical body and is characterised by moderately long barbels, nasoral grooves and the mouth is well in front of eyes. The eyes are lateral, spiracles minute and the first dorsal fin is far behind and is over the pelvic fins. The pectoral fins are falcate and the upper caudal lobe is moderately long. Generally these sharks inhabit reefs and are found at a depth of 70 m.



Fig. 1. *Nebrius ferrugineus* (Lesson, 1830) landed at New Ferry Wharf, Mumbai