

A note on the ocean sunfish *Mola mola* (Linnaeus, 1759)

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On 27th August 2013, an ocean sunfish (*Mola mola*) commonly known as mola was landed at Karwar fisheries harbour. The fish was caught in

purse seine operated in the coastal waters at around 40 m depth. Specimen (total weight: 50 kg; total length 95 cm) was grey in colour, covered with

extremely thick, elastic skin (Fig.1). Also, extensive subcutaneous fat deposits were noted throughout the body. The mouth was small and teeth were fused to form a parrot-like beak. There were four pairs of gills with a slit behind the last gill. The intestines were coiled (Fig.2) with semi-digested matter. The morphometric measurement of the specimen is listed in Table 1. The *Mola* genus belongs to Molidae family. This family comprises three genera: *Masturus*, *Mola* and *Ranzania*. Molas have a very broad global distribution, occurring in both temperate and tropical waters of the Atlantic, Indian, and Pacific Oceans. They are pelagic and swim at depths of up to 600 m. The extensive fat



Fig. 1. Ocean sunfish, *Mola mola*

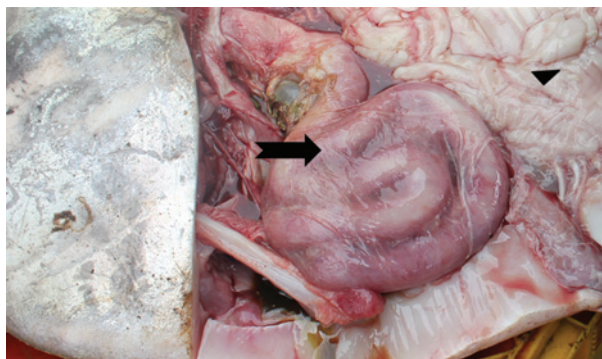


Fig. 2. Coiled intestine (arrow) and extensive fat deposits (arrow head) in *Mola mola*

deposits under the skin observed in the present case would probably help the fish to resist extreme cold temperature of the water in its habitat. Not many reports are available on biology, food and feeding of these fishes. Earlier, landings of oceanic sun fish (*Mola mola*) at Visakhapatnam in the east coast, Bombay, Veraval and Malpe in Karnataka in west coast have been reported.

Table 1. Morphometric measurements (in mm) of *Mola mola* caught at Karwar

Total length	950
Standard (preclaval) length	780
Height of the body	670
Length of dorsal fin	500
Pectoral fin length	140
Length of anal fin	480
Eye diameter horizontal	50
Eye diameter Vertical	45
Pectoral fin base breadth	65
Dorsal fin base breadth	220
Anal fin base breadth	230