

**A NOTE ON A GIANT SAW FISH, *PRISTIS MICRODON* LATHAM
FROM THE RIVER TAPTI AT SURAT**

J. P. KARBHARI

Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute; Unit, Veraval

594 cm. long Saw-fish, *Pristis microdon* Latham, enmeshed in the bottom set gill nets, operated in the river Tapti, within about a furlong from the shore, was landed at Surat on 22-6-1972. The present size being the largest, some important morphometric measurements and useful observations are presented.

Pristis microdon Latham ascends river at least 64 Kms. from the sea far beyond the influence of the tides and salt water (Day, 1878) and the species is said to attain 457.2 cm (J. L. B. Smith, 1953; Munro, 1955). This note records observations made on *Pristis microdon*, measuring 594 cm landed on 22-6-1972 at Surat (Lat. 21° 10'N Long. 72° 48, E). The present size appears to be the largest recorded from the river Tapti about 18 km inland.

The following morphometric measurements were taken:—

1. Total length	594 cm
2. Standard length	521 cm
3. Interorbital distance	23 cm
4. Snout to first dorsal	202 cm
5. Snout to second dorsal	305 cm
6. Snout to pectoral	78.8 cm
7. Snout to ventral	193.5 cm
8. Height of first dorsal	30.9 cm
9. Height of second dorsal	38.3 cm
10. Least height of Caudal peduncle	13.9 cm
11. Girth of body at Pectoral base	76.6 cm
12. Length of rostrum	188 cm
13. Width of rostrum at base	18.8 cm
14. Width of rostrum at tip	9.3 cm
15. Number of teeth on right side of the rostrum	18 Nos.
16. Number of teeth on left side of the rostrum	19 Nos.
17. Number of yolk-laden ova of large sized measuring 45 to 48 mm (in diameter) obtained from the posterior region of ovary	33 Nos.

18. Number of embryos measuring 45 to 86 cm recovered from the fish 23 Nos.

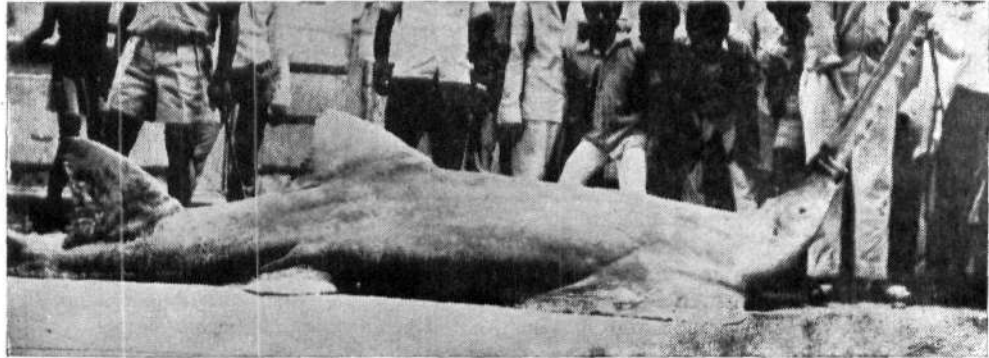


FIG. 1. *Pristis microdom* Lahtam from the river Tapti at Surat.

On 22-6-1972 at about 2300 hours during the high tide the fishermen of Surat were surprised to find a saw-fish enmeshed in the bottom set gill nets operated in the river Tapti, within about a furlong from the shore. A loop was put around the rostral region and hauled ashore by a group of enterprising fishermen. Being the first instance of such a huge fish getting entangled in the nets of the fishermen, it attracted all the villagers, who flocked from different directions to have a look at the monster.

The fish was auctioned out for Rs. 1,300/- and was transported in a truck to the wholesale fish market. On examining the contents of stomach two small sized specimens of *Otolithoides biaurites* (Koth) in semidigested condition and a few specimens of *Engraulis* sp. were revealed. The total weight of the fish was estimated at 800 kgs and the weight of liver, measuring 103 cm in length and 82 cm in width, 80 kgs which was valued at Rs. 400/-. The flesh was filleted, and salted and dried for marketing at UKAI.

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