

Commentaries on, ‘the occurrence of Indo-Pacific Humpback Dolphin in estuarine area of Narmada River, Gujarat’

Recently, Joshi et al. (2024) published a note on the occurrence of Indo-Pacific Humpback Dolphins *Sousa chinensis* (Osbeck, 1765) (now IPHD) in the estuarine area of Narmada River, Gujarat. This is a motivating new locality record of the species from the Gulf of Gujarat. The authors claim that, ‘*the photographic record by the GEER Foundation research team is the first authentic record of the occurrence of the Indo-Pacific Humpback Dolphin in the Narmada River estuary in the Bharuch District near the Gulf of Khambhat*’. The claim of the record is the resulting outcome of a poor literature survey, and further, I have provided a few chronological update records of the species from coastal Gujarat, India (Table 1).

The IPHD is categorized as ‘Vulnerable’ as per the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species (Jefferson et al. 2017). It is a Schedule-I marine mammal as per the Indian Wildlife (Protection)



Indo-Pacific Humpback Dolphin *Sousa chinensis* stranding near Umaraya Village. © Kartik Upadhyay.

Amendment Act, 2022. It is included in Appendix I of the Conservation of International Trade of Endangered Species of Flora and Fauna (CITES) and listed in Appendices II of the Convention on Migratory Species (CMS). This species inhabits the coastal waters of the eastern and western Indian Ocean and the northwestern, southwestern, and western central Pacific oceans (Reeves et al. 2008). These dolphins have been reported to occupy a variety of habitats in the coastal areas which

includes estuaries (Parsons 1998; Muralidharan 2013), mangrove islands (Cagnazzi et al. 2011), enclosed bays (Karczmarski et al. 1999; Chen et al. 2009), shallow rocky reefs (Karczmarski et al. 2000), whereas sometimes they enter rivers (Singh 2003). While information on various aspects of the dolphin is available, very little information is available on the accidental stranding, rescue, and return of humpback dolphins along the Indian coast (Kasim et al. 1994).

Table 1. Details of records of Indo-Pacific Humpback Dolphins *Sousa chinensis* from coastal waters of Gujarat, India.

	Date	Location	Source
1	16xii1976	Devka, Bhimpore, Union Territory, South Gujarat	Joglekar et al. 1977
2	iv1977	Udwada, Pardi, Valsad District, South Gujarat	Joglekar et al. 1977
3	i2002	Beyt Dwarka, Chusna, Kalubhar, Pirotan, Gulf of Kutch	Sutaria & Jefferson 2004
4	16x2014	Mithapur, Gulf of Kutch, Gujarat	Adhavan et al. 2016
5	3xii2014	Jakhau, Kutch	Kukadia et al. 2016
6	28xii2015	Mahi River, Gambhira bridge, Padra Taluka, Vadodara, Gujarat.	Solanki et al. 2018
7	29x2018	Mahi River, Umaraya, Gambhira, Padra Taluka, Vadodara, Gujarat.	Unpublished, Vyas Raju
8	6v2019	Sakkarpur Borbhatha, Ankleshwar Taluka, Bharuch District	Times of India 2019
9	2xii2022	Narmada River, Mahegam, Bharuch	Joshi et al. 2024

The species has been reported along the Indian coast and along the Gujarat coast. Its presence has been reported from the Gulf of Kachchh, Saurashtra coast and Surat coast (Sutaria et al. 2015). IPHD is known to prefer shallow, inshore waters ranging from a minimum of 0–10 m to a maximum of 21–30 m depth (Ross et al. 1994; Sutaria & Jefferson 2004). In Gujarat, strandings of IPHD have been documented due to net entanglement at the Veraval coast (Kizhakudan et al. 1998) and shark attacks at the Mithapur coast (Adhavan et al. 2016) whereas the causes of stranding at Devka and

Udwada coast (Joglekar et al. 1977) and its occurrences in Marine National Park, Gulf of Kutch (Sutaria & Jefferson 2004), and Solanki et al. (2018) provided details of the recorded an accidental standing, rescue and release of IPHD from a natural pool of Mahi River, Gulf of Khambhat, Vadodara, Gujarat, India.

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