

Some data on Biometry and Stomach Content of a Mediterranean Monk Seal found in Santorini Island (Greece)

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ABSTRACT

A Mediterranean Monk seal strangled by a fishing net, was dissected. The content of the stomach and measurements of the digestive system are reported. From these measurements no conclusion was made about this Monk's eating habits.

Materials and Methods

A male *Monachus monachus*, was strangled by a trammel net and was found in Santorini island, south of the village Acrotiri, on March 13, 1990. The Monk was 239cm long, measured from the tip of the snout to the tip of the flippers and 218cm long from the tip of the snout to the tip of the tail. The perimeter at the level of the navel was 121cm.

The Monk seal was transported and dissected in Athens about 65 hours after its death. The stomach was immersed and filled as well as, with 37% formaline.

Results

A. Measurements of the digestive system:

Length of esophagus: 0.25m.

Length of the stomach: 0.50m.

Length of the small intestine: 16.66m.

External diameter of the small intestine: 31.00mm.

Length of the large intestine: 1.36m.

B. Stomach content:

The stomach was almost full and its content weighted 5.5kg. From all this mass we separated 22 fish specimens (53% of the total weight). We have identified eleven fish individuals (39% of the total weight) which belong to nine different species. (see table 1). We have also found a small piece of fishing net (39mm net's eye opening).

Table 1. Species of fish and squid which were identified in the stomach of the seal which was found in Santorini island.

Species	Length (cm)	Weight (g)
<i>Boops boops</i>	23	148
<i>Boops boops</i>	19	100
<i>Boops boops</i>	16.5	58
<i>Oblada melanura</i>	25	218
<i>Diplodus vulgaris</i>	21	218
<i>Lophius sp. (piece)</i>	39	517
<i>Lophius sp. (piece)</i>	-	223
<i>Serranus sp.</i>	21	88
<i>Scomber scombrus</i>	17	120
<i>Mullus sp. (piece)</i>	80	32
<i>Triglidae (piece)</i>	210	264
<i>Sepia officinalis</i>	-	163

Discussion

The fishing net where the animal was trapped presented many holes, some of them typically made by the seals. This fact along with the presence of a piece of the same fishing net inside the stomach indicate that, at least the last amount of the digested fish (53% of the total food mass), were caught by the seal from the fishing net. Therefore, from these data, we cannot obtain a definite answer on the seal's diet in the wild environment. However, we found out that the animal did not eviscerated the preys taken from the net.

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