

NOTE ON THE WEIGHT OF BODY PARTS, INCLUDING FINS, OF THE SMALLTOOTH SAWFISH *PRISTIS PECTINATA*¹

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In July 1976, I became by default the scientific leader of a demersal survey conducted by *R/V Mutiara 4* in the southern Indonesian part of the South China Sea (south and east of Singapore), documented in Pauly *et al.* (1996).

During the cruise, we captured a large sawfish (Family Pristidae), which we identified as the smalltooth sawfish *Pristis pectinata* Latham 1794 (Figure 1). At the time, all large sharks we caught were fanned by the Indonesian crew of the *Mutiara 4*, the fins hanged to dry, garland-like, from the ship's rigging, and later sold on the 'soup fin' market by the crew as bonus. The saw was sold separately for the curios market.

This sawfish, of 270-300 cm (total length, i.e., including the saw-like snout), differed from others

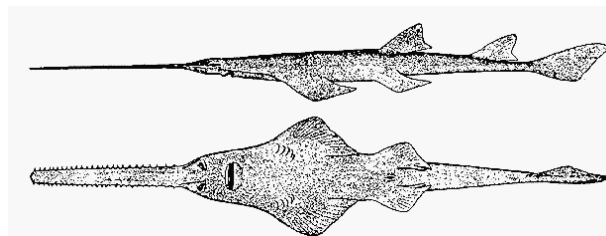


Figure 1 The smalltooth sawfish, *Pristis pectinata* Latham 1794, Family Pristidae (drawing from Massey and Harper, 1993).

Table 1 Weight (in kg and as % of the total body weight, i.e., 201.7 kg) of different body parts of a mature female smalltooth sawfish, caught on June 18, 1976, at Station 154 (~0°25'S; 103°54'E, 15 m depth) in Pauly *et al.* (1996)

Body part	Weight	%	Body parts (extremities)	Weight	%
Head	47.5	23.5	Saw	2.0	1.0
Trunk	95.0	47.1	Dorsal fins (2)	3.5	1.7
Liver	26.0	12.9	Pectoral fins (2)	10.0	5.0
Other inner organs	8.2	4.1	Ventral fins (2)	5.0	2.5
Blood (recovered)	~1.0	0.5	Caudal fin	3.5	1.7

in that I weighted its different body parts. The results of this rather bloody exercise are given in Table 1.

Thirty years later, the smalltooth sawfish is 'Critically endangered' on the IUCN Redlist (Baillie *et al.*, 2004), both because it is caught as by-catch by trawlers fishing for shrimps and fish (as was the *Mutiara 4*), and targeted for its fins.

Little did we know.

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