

# Length-weight relationship and condition factor of common dolphinfish (*Coryphaena hippurus* Linnaeus, 1758) landed at the General Santos City Fish Port Complex, Philippines

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**Abstract.** Limited published biological information on common dolphinfish (*Coryphaena hippurus* Linnaeus, 1758) from Philippine port landings highlights the need for baseline biometric data to support fisheries documentation and future length-based assessments. This study assessed the length-weight relationship and Fulton's condition factor of *C. hippurus* landed at the General Santos City Fish Port Complex, Philippines, during the September 2025 sampling period. A total of 100 specimens were randomly sampled from commercial landings and measured for fork length and body weight. Fork length ranged from 53 to 127 cm, while body weight ranged from 1,028 to 9,690 g. The length-weight relationship showed a strong positive association between fork length and body weight and was described by  $W = 0.01853FL^{2.7206}$ , with a Pearson correlation coefficient of 0.9833 and coefficient of determination of 0.9669. The estimated growth exponent of 2.7206 was significantly lower than the isometric value of 3.0, indicating negative allometric growth during the sampling period. The sampled fish had a mean Fulton's condition factor of 0.551, representing the relative body condition of the specimens at the time of collection. These findings suggest that fork length can serve as a reliable predictor of body weight for *C. hippurus* landed under similar port-based sampling conditions. However, because the study was based on 100 port-landed specimens collected during a single sampling period and did not include sex identification, gonadal maturity assessment, stomach fullness evaluation, fishing-ground information, or seasonal sampling, the results should be interpreted as preliminary baseline information rather than annual, fishing-ground, or stock-level estimates. Further studies with seasonal sampling and biological assessment are needed to better understand growth and condition variation of *C. hippurus* in Philippine pelagic fisheries.

**Keywords:** allometric growth, biometric assessment, Fulton's K, pelagic fisheries, tropical waters.

**Introduction.** The common dolphinfish, *Coryphaena hippurus* Linnaeus, 1758, is an epipelagic and highly migratory pelagic fish widely distributed in tropical and subtropical waters. It is characterized by rapid growth, high mobility, and seasonal occurrence in oceanic and coastal fisheries (NOAA Fisheries, n.d.; Assana et al., 2020; Froese & Pauly, 2024). As an active pelagic predator, *C. hippurus* feeds on pelagic fishes, crustaceans, cephalopods, and zooplankton, and its body weight and condition may vary depending on food availability, feeding intensity, and environmental conditions (Assana et al., 2020). In the Philippines, *C. hippurus* occurs in association with tuna and other pelagic fishes and is commonly encountered as a non-target or associated species in commercial landings. The National Tuna Management Plan identifies *C. hippurus* among the associated species or bycatch reported in Philippine tuna fisheries, indicating its relevance within local pelagic fishing systems even though it is not a primary target species (Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources, 2018).

General Santos City is widely recognized as the “Tuna Capital of the Philippines” because of its long history of tuna production and its major contribution to national tuna landings. The General Santos Fish Port Complex is one of the country’s major landing centers for tuna and other pelagic fishery resources, making it an important site for documenting associated and non-target pelagic species landed with commercial tuna fisheries (Pechon et al., 2022). Despite the occurrence of *C. hippurus* in Philippine commercial pelagic landings, publicly accessible and species-specific biological information on this species from Philippine port-landed samples remains limited. This lack of local biometric information restricts the availability of baseline data needed for fisheries documentation, comparative biological studies, and future length-based assessments of associated pelagic species.

The length-weight relationship and Fulton’s condition factor are widely used biometric tools in fisheries biology. The length-weight relationship describes the association between fish length and body weight and provides useful information on fish growth, body form, ecological adaptation, and population dynamics (Le Cren, 1951; Froese, 2006; Li et al., 2023; Ragheb, 2023). Its parameters are also useful for estimating biomass from length data, assessing growth patterns, and supporting fisheries management and conservation strategies, particularly in data-limited situations (Julius et al., 2025; Kell & Sharma, 2025). Fulton’s condition factor provides a simple index of the relative body condition of fish and may reflect variation in feeding condition, environmental quality, physiological state, and other biological or ecological factors (Fulton, 1904; Le Cren, 1951; Froese, 2006). However, because fish growth and condition may be influenced by body form, size range, season, sex, maturity stage, feeding condition, and environmental variability, these indicators should be interpreted within the local ecological and fisheries context (Bolger & Connolly, 1989; Froese, 2006).

For non-target and associated pelagic species such as *C. hippurus*, baseline information on the length-weight relationship and condition factor may contribute to fisheries monitoring by documenting species landed with tuna and other commercial pelagic fishes. Such information can support comparative biological studies, improve local fisheries records, and provide reference data for future assessments related to pelagic resource sustainability in Philippine waters. This is particularly important for species that are regularly encountered in commercial landings but remain less studied compared with major tuna species.

Therefore, this study aimed to determine the length-weight relationship and Fulton’s condition factor of *C. hippurus* landed at the General Santos City Fish Port Complex, Philippines. Because the study was based on 100 port-landed specimens collected during a single sampling period, the findings are intended to provide preliminary port-based baseline information rather than annual, fishing-ground, or stock-level conclusions. The results may serve as reference information for future comparative growth studies, fisheries monitoring, pelagic bycatch documentation, and length-based assessment of *C. hippurus* and other associated pelagic species in Philippine waters.

## Material and Method

**Study area and duration.** This study was conducted at the General Santos City Fish Port Complex, General Santos City, Philippines, a major landing center for tuna and other pelagic fishery resources in southern Mindanao. The study focused on *C. hippurus* landed from commercial fishing operations during the September 2025 sampling period. A total of 100 port-landed specimens were randomly selected from available commercial landing batches and used for biometric analysis. The geographic location of the study area and sampling site is presented in Figure 1.

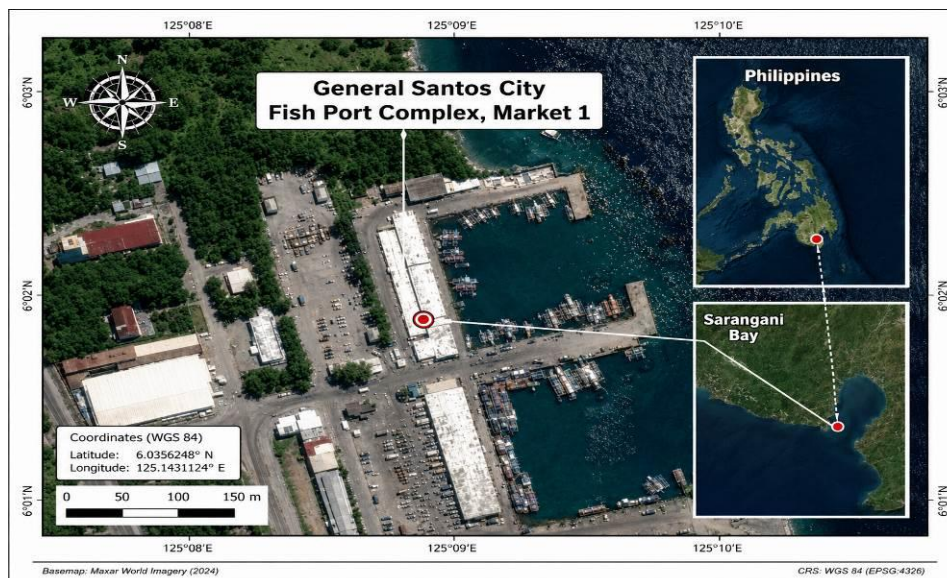


Figure 1. Map of the General Santos City Fish Port Complex, Philippines.

**Sample collection and biometric measurements.** A total of 100 *C. hippurus* specimens were obtained from commercial landings during the sampling period. Specimens were randomly selected from available landing batches without prior sorting by size or weight to reduce selection bias. Samples were taken from available commercial landing batches at General Santos City Fish Port Complex; however, vessel-level information was not consistently available at the time of sampling, and therefore the specimens were treated as port-based landed samples rather than vessel-specific samples. Measurements were conducted immediately after acquisition from the landing area to minimize changes in body weight and external condition. Only physically intact specimens were included to ensure reliable biometric measurement. Fork length was measured in centimeters, while body weight was recorded in grams using a calibrated weighing scale. The representative specimen and biometric measurement procedure are shown in Figure 2.



Figure 2. Documentation of common dolphinfish used in the study: (a) lateral view of a fresh specimen showing external morphology and coloration with a measuring scale; and (b) weight measurement during data collection.

Sex identification was not performed in this study because the specimens were obtained from commercial landings and the analysis was limited to external biometric measurements. Therefore, male and female specimens were pooled in the analysis. This limitation was considered in interpreting the results, as sex-related differences may influence length-weight relationships and condition factor values.

**Length-weight relationship.** The length-weight relationship was described using the conventional power equation:

$$W = aFL^b$$

where  $W$  is body weight in grams,  $FL$  is fork length in centimeters,  $a$  is the intercept, and  $b$  is the allometric growth coefficient (Le Cren, 1951; Froese, 2006).

For statistical analysis, the model was linearized using logarithmic transformation and fitted by least-squares linear regression. The estimated  $b$  value was tested against the isometric reference value of 3.0 using a one-sample  $t$ -test at  $\alpha = 0.05$  (Zar, 2014).

**Condition factor.** Fulton's condition factor ( $K$ ) was calculated using the equation:

$$K = (W / FL^3) \times 100$$

where  $K$  is Fulton's condition factor,  $W$  is body weight in grams, and  $FL$  is fork length in centimeters.

Fulton's condition factor was used as a simple index of relative body condition of the sampled *C. hippurus* during the September 2025 landing period. Because the interpretation of  $K$  may be influenced by species, body form, size class, growth pattern, sex, maturity stage, feeding condition, and season, the values were interpreted only as site- and period-specific estimates of relative condition rather than as direct indicators of health, nutritional status, reproductive status, or stock condition (Fulton, 1904; Le Cren, 1951; Froese, 2006).

**Statistical treatment.** Descriptive statistics were used to summarize fork length, body weight, and Fulton's condition factor. The coefficient of determination ( $R^2$ ) and Pearson correlation coefficient ( $R$ ) were used to evaluate the strength of the fitted regression model. Regression diagnostics were performed by visually examining residual plots from the log-transformed regression model to assess linearity, homoscedasticity, and the presence of influential deviations. Standard errors and 95% confidence intervals were calculated for the estimated regression parameters  $a$  and  $b$  to improve the precision and interpretability of the length-weight relationship estimates. The estimated allometric coefficient ( $b$ ) was tested against the isometric value of 3.0 using a one-sample  $t$ -test at a significance level of  $\alpha = 0.05$ . All data encoding, computation of Fulton's condition factor, descriptive statistics, regression analysis, and statistical testing were performed using Microsoft Excel for Microsoft 365, Version 16.0.

**Results.** A total of 100 *C. hippurus*, specimens were analyzed. Fork length ranged from 53 to 127 cm, while body weight ranged from 1,028 to 9,690 g. The relatively broad size range of the sampled specimens provided adequate coverage for estimating the length-weight relationship. The length-weight relationship was described by the equation:

$$W = 0.01853FL^{2.7206}$$

where  $W$  represents body weight in grams and  $FL$  represents fork length in centimeters. The estimated intercept was  $a = 0.01853$  with a standard error of 0.00412 and a 95% confidence interval of 0.01192-0.02881. The estimated allometric coefficient was  $b = 2.7206$  with a standard error of 0.0509 and a 95% confidence interval of 2.6197-2.8215. The regression showed a strong positive relationship between fork length and body weight, with  $R = 0.9833$  and  $R^2 = 0.9669$ . The fitted log-transformed length-weight relationship is shown in Figure 3. The estimated  $b$  value was significantly lower than the isometric value of 3.0 based on a one-sample  $t$ -test,  $t(98) = -5.493$ ,  $p < 0.001$ , indicating negative allometric growth during the sampling period. Visual examination of

the residuals from the log-transformed regression did not show major departures from linearity or obvious patterns that would invalidate the fitted model.

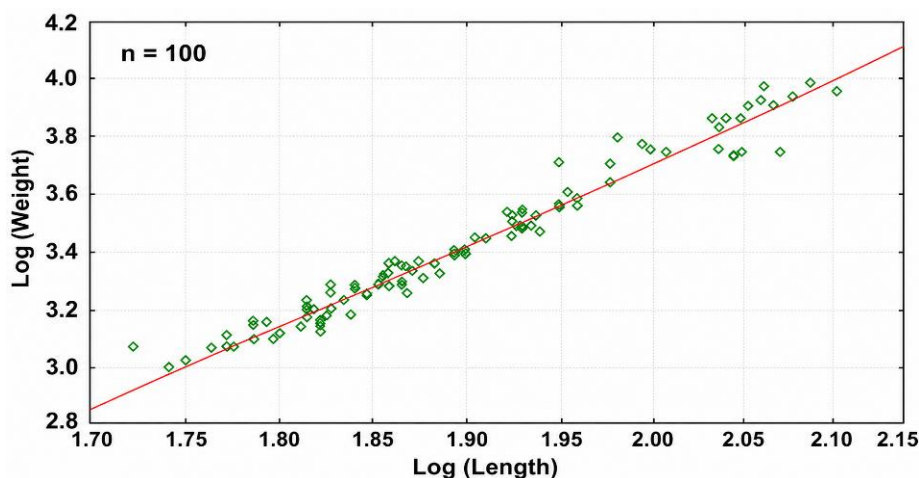


Figure 3. Scatter plot showing the length-weight relationship of common dolphinfish (*Coryphaena hippurus*) landed at the General Santos City Fish Port Complex.

The sampled *C. hippurus* had a mean Fulton's condition factor of  $K = 0.551 \pm 0.0668$  during the September 2025 landing period. The distribution of Fulton's condition factor among the sampled dolphinfish is shown in Figure 4. Summary statistics, regression parameters, confidence intervals, and test results are presented in Table 1.

Table 1  
Summary of the length-weight relationship and Fulton's condition factor of *Coryphaena hippurus* landed at the General Santos City Fish Port Complex in September 2025

| Parameter                           | Value                    |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| Sample size, n                      | 100                      |
| Fork length range, cm               | 53-127                   |
| Body weight range, g                | 1,028-9,690              |
| Regression equation                 | $W = 0.01853FL^{2.7206}$ |
| Intercept, a                        | 0.01853                  |
| SE of a                             | 0.00412                  |
| 95% CI of a                         | 0.01192-0.02881          |
| Allometric coefficient, b           | 2.7206                   |
| SE of b                             | 0.0509                   |
| 95% CI of b                         | 2.6197-2.8215            |
| Pearson correlation coefficient, R  | 0.9833                   |
| Coefficient of determination, $R^2$ | 0.9669                   |
| t-test for $b = 3$                  | $t(98) = -5.493$         |
| p-value                             | < 0.001                  |
| Growth pattern                      | Negative allometric      |
| Mean Fulton's condition factor, K   | 0.551                    |
| SD of K                             | 0.0668                   |

\* $p < 0.001$ , highly significant. W = body weight; FL = fork length; a = intercept; b = allometric coefficient; SE = standard error; CI = confidence interval; K = Fulton's condition factor. The value of b was tested against the isometric value of 3.0 at  $\alpha = 0.05$ .

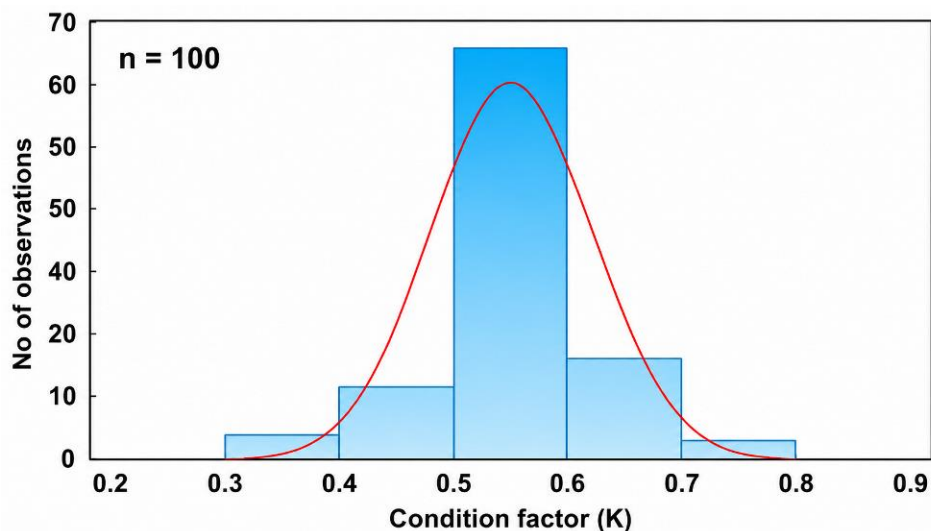


Figure 4. Histogram showing the distribution of Fulton's condition factor (K) for common dolphinfish (n = 100), with overlaid normal curve.

**Discussion.** The present study provides baseline information on the length-weight relationship and Fulton's condition factor of *C. hippurus* landed at the General Santos City Fish Port Complex during September 2025. The length-weight relationship showed a strong positive association between fork length and body weight, with the fitted model  $W = 0.01853FL^{2.7206}$ ,  $R = 0.9833$ , and  $R^2 = 0.9669$ . The high coefficient of determination indicates that fork length explained most of the variation in body weight among the sampled specimens.

The estimated growth exponent,  $b = 2.7206$ , was significantly lower than the isometric value of 3.0, indicating negative allometric growth. This suggests that the sampled *C. hippurus* increased proportionally more in length than in body weight within the observed fork length range of 53-127 cm. Similar negative allometric growth has been reported for *C. hippurus* from nearby tropical waters. Retheesh et al. (2021) reported a  $b$  value of 2.786 for *C. hippurus* from the south-eastern Arabian Sea, while Assana et al. (2020) also reported  $b$  values below 3.0 for *C. hippurus* from the same broader tropical region. These comparable findings suggest that the negative allometric pattern observed in the present study is consistent with reports from other tropical pelagic fisheries.

The estimated  $b$  value in the present study was also lower than the Bayesian reference estimate for *C. hippurus* reported in FishBase-derived length-weight information, which is approximately 2.88 based on the Bayesian approach described by Froese et al. (2014). Compared with the south-eastern Arabian Sea estimates reported by Retheesh et al. (2021) and Assana et al. (2020), the present  $b$  value suggests a slightly more pronounced negative allometric pattern among *C. hippurus* landed at the General Santos City Fish Port Complex during the sampling period. Such differences may reflect variation in size composition, feeding condition, habitat characteristics, fishing grounds, sampling season, and other ecological or fishery-related factors.

Biologically, negative allometric growth in *C. hippurus* may be associated with its fast-growing, highly mobile, and epipelagic life history (Froese & Pauly, 2024; NOAA Fisheries, n.d.). Dolphinfish are active opportunistic predators that feed on pelagic fishes, crustaceans, cephalopods, and zooplankton, and their body weight may vary depending on prey availability and recent feeding condition (Assana et al., 2020). Variation in feeding intensity, habitat conditions, and local prey distribution may therefore influence body weight and condition during a particular landing period. In addition, commercial landings may be affected by fishing ground, gear selectivity, market sorting, and the availability of particular size classes, which may contribute to variation in the observed growth pattern.

The mean Fulton's condition factor observed in the sampled *C. hippurus* was  $K = 0.551$ . This value represents the relative body condition of the sampled fish during the

September 2025 landing period. Although Fulton's  $K$  is widely used as a simple condition index, its interpretation may vary among species, size classes, reproductive stages, and sampling periods (Le Cren, 1951; Bolger & Connolly, 1989; Froese, 2006). Fulton's  $K$  assumes a generally cubic relationship between length and weight; therefore, its use may be limited when fish exhibit allometric growth or when body shape changes across size classes (Froese, 2006). For pelagic species such as *C. hippurus*, body condition may also be influenced by active swimming behavior, feeding intensity, prey availability, and maturity stage.

From a fisheries monitoring perspective, the length-weight relationship established in this study provides a practical reference for estimating body weight from fork length measurements of dolphinfish landed at the port during similar sampling conditions. Length-weight parameters are useful in estimating biomass from length data, describing growth patterns, and supporting length-based fisheries assessments and management, particularly in data-limited fisheries (Li et al., 2023; Kell & Sharma, 2025). Such information may be useful for documenting associated or non-target pelagic species in commercial landings, improving local biological databases, and supporting future length-based assessments.

**Limitations of the study.** This study was based on 100 port-landed specimens collected during a single sampling period in September 2025. Therefore, the findings should be interpreted as site- and period-specific baseline information rather than as seasonal, annual, fishing-ground, or stock-level estimates. The study did not include sex identification, gonadal maturity assessment, gonadosomatic index, stomach fullness evaluation, diet analysis, fishing-ground information, fishing effort data, or environmental variables such as water temperature, chlorophyll concentration, and other habitat-related parameters. Because reproductive and feeding data were not collected, possible influences of spawning condition, post-spawning condition, prey availability, and recent feeding status cannot be confirmed. Accordingly, the observed Fulton's condition factor should be interpreted only as a preliminary estimate of relative body condition during the sampling period and not as evidence of reproductive status, physiological depletion, poor population condition, or stock status. Future studies should incorporate seasonal sampling, sex-based analysis, maturity staging, stomach content or diet assessment, fishing-ground data, fishing effort information, and environmental variables to better understand the biological and fisheries drivers of growth and condition variation in *C. hippurus* in Philippine pelagic fisheries.

**Conclusions.** Common dolphinfish (*Coryphaena hippurus*) landed at the General Santos City Fish Port Complex during September 2025 exhibited a strong length-weight relationship, indicating that fork length can serve as a reliable predictor of body weight for sampled landed specimens. The fitted model,  $W = 0.01853FL^{2.7206}$ , showed a strong association between fork length and body weight, while the estimated growth exponent was significantly lower than the isometric value of 3.0, indicating negative allometric growth during the sampling period. The sampled fish also had a mean Fulton's condition factor of 0.551, representing the relative body condition of the specimens at the time of collection. These findings provide useful baseline information for comparative growth studies, fisheries monitoring, pelagic bycatch documentation, and future length-based assessment of *C. hippurus* in Philippine waters. From a fisheries monitoring perspective, the results may support improved documentation of *C. hippurus* as an associated or non-target pelagic species in commercial landings, particularly in major landing centers such as General Santos City. Continued biological monitoring across seasons, size classes, and landing periods is recommended to better understand the growth pattern, biological condition, and fisheries relevance of *C. hippurus* in southern Philippine waters.

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**Authors' Contributions.** Conceptualization: LFCB, LTE, NJSL; Methodology: LFCB, LTE; Formal analysis: LFCB, LTE; Investigation: LFCB; Data curation: LFCB, LTE; Writing – original draft: LFCB; Writing – review and editing: LTE, RJAT, BR, NJSL, EDSRE; Supervision: LTE, RJAT, BR, NJSL. All authors read and approved the final manuscript.

**Conflict of Interest.** The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest.

**Data Availability.** The data supporting the findings of this study are available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request.

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