

ON THE SUNFISH, *MOLA MOLA* (L)
A NEW RECORD FROM INDIAN WATERS

MOHAMMAD ZAFAR KHAN

Bombay Research Centre of C.M.F.R. Institute, Bombay.

ABSTRACT

The sunfish, *Mola mola* (L), is recorded for the first time from Indian waters. Various body measurements of the single specimen caught from Satpati, Bombay, are given.

Sunfish *Mola mola* (L) has been recorded for the first time from the Indian waters. The general distribution of the species is in the Atlantic and Pacific, although a single record off Ceylon is reported earlier. The specific identity of the fish has been established by the typical characters such as, orbicular body, unproduced median rays of clavus, and band of reduced denticles, which are smoother to touch at the base of clavus from dorsal to anal.

The fish was caught off Satpati on the 25th February 1973 in a gill net. Satpati is situated at a distance of about 96 km north of Bombay. The fish was examined on the same day.

This is the first record of *Mola mola* (L) from the Indian waters. Deraniyagala (1944) recorded one specimen of *M. mola* (L) from Ceylon waters. A few allied species of the family Molidae have been recorded by Kulkarni (1953), Chacko and Mathew (1956), Chapgar (1963) and Pradhan (1964).

A brief description of the fish is given below:

D.16. A.13. P.11.

Total length	.. 1240 mm
Height of the body	.. 880 mm
Head length	.. 350 mm
Eye diameter	.. 55 mm
Length from the tip of the snout to the origin of dorsal fin	.. 750 mm
Length from the tip of the snout to the origin of anal fin	.. 870 mm
Length of dorsal fin	.. 560 mm
Length of anal fin	.. 540 mm

The fish was laterally compressed and orbicular in shape (Fig. 1). The fin folds of dorsal, anal and caudal were continuous. Both dorsal and anal fins were more or less of the same size. Clavus was thick and fleshy in nature hence counting of fin rays was not possible. Pelvic fins were absent. Denticles of body

reduced and smoother to touch in a band at the base of dorsal, clavus and anal. Intestine was coiled. Colour greyish with more or less distinct silvery hue. Back and fins darker.



FIG. 1. *Mola mola* (L.) recorded from Satpati, Bombay.

Mola mola is common in Atlantic, but records show its stray occurrence in Japan, Australia, Hawaii and Ceylon.

The author is thankful to Dr S. V. Bapat and Shri V. M. Deshmukh for critical reading of the manuscript and offering valuable suggestions. Thanks are due to the staff of the Office of the Superintendent of Fisheries, Palghar, Maharashtra, for their kind co-operation in obtaining data and photograph.

CHAPGAR, B. P. 1964. *J. Bombay nat. Hist. Soc.*, **61** (2): 453-456.

CHACKO AND MATHIEW. 1956. *J. Bombay nat. Hist. Soc.*, **53** (4): 724-725.

DERANIYAGALA, P. E. P. 1944. *J. Bombay nat. Hist. Soc.*, **44** (3): 426-430.

FRASER-BRUNNER, A. 1951. *Bull. Brit. Mus. (Nat. Hist.) Zool.*, **1** (6): 89-121.

KULKARNI, C. V. 1953. *J. Bombay nat. Hist. Soc.*, **51** (4): 948-950.

PRADHAN, M. J. 1965. *J. Bombay nat. Hist. Soc.*, **62** (1): 163-164.

WEBER, MAX AND BEAUFORT, L. F. D. 1962. *The fishes of the Indo-Australian Archipelago*, **11** 416-423.