

A NOTE ON A SCIAENID *JOHNIEOPS SINA* (CUVIER) WITH
THREE ANAL SPINES

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ABSTRACT

Sciaenids have generally one or two anal spines. A small sciaenid *Johnieops sina* (Cuvier) collected from Bombay waters with three anal spines is described. In most fishes the number of spines in the anal fin is the least variable feature.

The number of spines and soft rays in the dorsal and anal fins in most fishes provide a fair identity to the particular family to which they belong. While counts in the spines, and most commonly the rays in these fins show variations even within the same species, the least variable feature in most fishes is the number of anal spines.

One of the characteristic features in fishes of the family Sciaenidae is the presence of one or two, generally two, spines in the anal fin, the first is usually small while the second is the larger. An unusual and interesting specimen of *Johnieops sina* (Cuvier), 156 mm in total length, having three spines in the anal fin was collected from the local trawl catch at Sassoon Docks in May 1973 (Fig. 1). The main features are as follows:

D. X, I, 27; A. III, 7; Ll. 48; Ltr. $\frac{6}{12}$

Length of first, second and third anal spines are 4, 13 and 13 mm respectively. Apart from this the fish shows all normal characters.

Hamilton (1822) attributes 3 spines in the anal fin of *Bola coibor* Hamilton as a normal feature. Day (1876), while describing *Sciaena albida* (Cuvier), places at the head of the synonymy *Bola coibor* Hamilton, 1822, yet uses the latter name, *albida*, doubtless because he was uncertain of the specific status of *coibor* Hamilton. Talwar (1970) considered *Bola coibor* Hamilton as not a sciaenid. Babu-Rao and Sinha (1968) recorded in a specimen of *Dendrophysa hooghliensis* Sinha and Babu-Rao (=Day *Sciaena albida* (Cuvier) three anal spines and opined that the first anal spine was obviously divided into two at a very early stage of development while the second one developed normally.

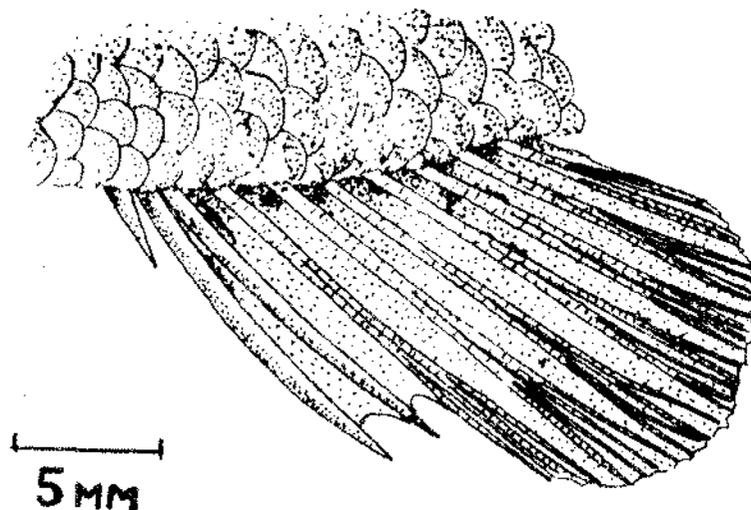


FIG. 1. The anal fin of *Johnnicops sinu* showing three spines.

In the present specimen, the 2nd and 3rd anal spines are of equal length. Therefore, it appears that the 2nd spine might have divided into two during early development while the 1st spine has grown normally.

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