

Spotfin porcupine fish spotted at Malabar coast



Diodon hystrix

A rare "spotfin porcupinefish" was landed at Ayikkara Fisheries Harbour in Kannur by a ring seine operating in 40-60 m depth during the last week of July, 2011. The species was identified as *Diodon hystrix* (Linnaeus, 1758), and it is the first report of this species from Malabar region. The spotfin porcupinefish family, Diodontidae is widely distributed in tropical and temperate waters. There are more than 19 species in eight genera in this family. The specimen measured 78 cm in length and weighed 3.5 kg. The spotfin porcupinefish has a greenish-

brown back and a white underside. It has small dark spots which cover its body and fins. Its distinctive spines are usually held flat to its body. However, when disturbed it is capable of inflating its body to stick out the spines for protection. This fish can grow to a maximum length of 3 feet, although they are usually found to be 1 to 2 feet. They are found mostly near cave openings and recesses in coral reefs to depths between 6 and 150 feet. They are solitary and nocturnal and feed on hard shelled invertebrates like sea

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