

**ON THE OCCURRENCE OF THE SPOTTED THREADFIN, *POLYNEMUS
MICROSTOMA* BLEEKER IN THE GULF OF MANNAR**

DURING the course of examination of the trawl catches off Mandapam in the Gulf of Mannar (79°-79°30' E. 8'50'-9°10' N. landed by the Indo-Norwegian Project fishing boats at Mandapam during October 1965 to March 1966, we came across several specimens of *Polynemus microstoma* Bleeker (Fig. 1) hitherto not reported from the seas around India. *Polynemus indicus* Shaw, *P. sextarius* Bl.

Schn., *P. heptadactylus* C.V., and *Eleutheronema tetradactylum* (Shaw) (*P. tetradactylus*) also occur in this region along with *P. microstoma*. Thirty specimens ranging in size from 144 mm. to 211 mm. in total length have been examined and a brief note on the same is given below. Two specimens are deposited in the reference collection museum of the Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute, No. CMFRI-F. 64/501.



Polynemus microstoma Bleeker.

In the three species, namely *P. microstoma*, *P. plebeius* and *P. indicus*, which have five free filaments in the lower half of pectoral fin, the first filament is the longest, reaching the middle of ventrals in *P. microstoma*, little beyond the tip of ventrals in *P. plebeius* and well beyond the end of ventrals or even upto the anal in *P. indicus* (but according to Weber and de Beaufort (1922) 2nd or 3rd filament is the longest in *P. indicus*). *P. microstoma* may also be distinguished from others by the presence of a dark opercular spot and a unique dark blotch on the shoulder at the beginning of the lateral line. The blotch measures 7 mm. long and 5 mm. wide in a specimen measuring 144 mm. and 13 mm. long and 7 mm. wide in a specimen measuring 211 mm. It commences on the 3rd or 4th scale of lateral line and extends over 5 to 6 successive scales.

The meristic counts of the specimens examined here differ slightly from those given by Weber and de Beaufort for *P. microstoma*. There are only 13 rays in the pectoral fin as against 15 stated by Weber and de Beaufort. Further, in all the specimens examined by us there are always 3 anal spines instead of a variation from 2 to 3 as mentioned by Weber and de Beaufort. The first anal spine may easily escape observation as it is very short and remains almost covered by the scales.

The known distribution of the species is from the southern tip of Formosa to Bali and Sumbawa in the south and from New Guinea westward upto Penang in Malaya coast. The present record extends the distribution of the species westward up to the Indian coast.

Details of body proportions and meristic counts of the 30 specimens examined are given below :

Sl. No.	Morphometric character	variation	Sl. No.	Meristic count	No. or range
1.	Head length	22.9-25.8	1.	Dorsal spines	
2.	Depth of body	21.3-24.5	1st Dorsal		VIII
3.	Length of caudal	23.1-28.5	2nd Dorsal		I
4.	Snout to origin of first dorsal	27.7-29.6	2.	Dorsal rays	13-14(13)
5.	Length of pectoral	14.2-16.4	3.	Anal spines	III
6.	Length of longest pectoral filament	17.3-20.3	4.	Anal rays	13
7.	Diameter of eye	6.2-6.6	5.	Pectoral fin rays	13
8.	Length of snout	4.8-5.2	6.	Pectoral filaments	5
			7.	Ventral spine	I
			8.	Ventral rays	5
			9.	Lateral line scales	47-50(49)
			10.	Lateral transverse row of scales	5/1/10

Parentheses indicate the most common number.

It may be mentioned in this connection that *P. sextarius* resembles *P. microstoma* in many external characters especially in the black blotches but the former could easily be distinguished by the presence of six filaments in the pectoral.

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REFERENCE

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