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OCCURRENCE OF BLACK MOUTH CROAKER, *ATROBUCCA NIBE* (JORDON AND THOMPSON) OFF VERAVAL COAST

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ABSTRACT

Black mouth croaker, *Atrobucca nibe* (Jordon and Thompson) has been reported from Veraval for the first time. Various morphometric, meristic characters together with a brief mention of some biological observations have been given in this note.

Occurence of *Atrobucca nibe* (Jordon and Thompson) along the east coast of India, Visakhapatnam has been observed by Rao (1914). There has been no report of its presence from northwest coast of India and present note deals with the occurrence of *A. nibe* (J & T) off Veraval coast of Saurashtra region.

During the routine studies on the biology and fisheries of sciaenid fishes along the Veraval coast, bulk landings of *A. nibe* (J & T) were noticed in the catches of the trawlers which operated at a depth of 30-40 m and 10-15 km away from the shore. The fishing lasted only for a short period i. e. rom 19th to 23rd November, 1986. The estimated catch during this period was 39,690 kg and 8% of sciaenid catch was constitued by this species.

Atrobucca nibe (Jordon and Thompson)

Pseudotolithus brunneolus Jordon and Richardson 1909; **191**, pl. 71 (Formosa — Taiwan).

Sciaena nibe Jordon and Thompson 1911. *Proc. U.S. Nat. Mus.*, 39: 241-261.

Atrobucca nibe Chu, Lo and Wu. *Monogr. Fish. China*, 64-65.

Material examined: Twenty specimens ranging from 187 to 282 mm in total length from trawl catches off Veraval were examined. Mean values are given in paranthesis.

Meristic data: DX + I, 28–29; P. 16–18; C. 17–20; A.II, 7–8; V. 5–6; G.R. 6 + 13; Air bladder diverticula. 24–28 (4 specimens); L1.56–64; Ltr. 7 + 16–17.

Body proportions as percentage of standard length: Head length 35.5–36.9 (35.6), body depth at origin of dorsal 25.3–30.5 (27.8), eye diameter 8.0–8.8 (8.4), snout length 8.2–9.8 (8.8), interorbital space 8.0–9.3 (8.6), second anal spine length 6.3–7.6 (7.2), upper jaw leng:h 13.8–15.5 (14.9), lower jaw leng:h 16.0–17.9 (17.4), pectoral fin length 27.3–30.1 (28.8), pelvic fin leng:h 17.4–20.7 (19.3), anal fin length 14.2–17.8 (15.9), caudal peduncle depth 7.1–9.3 (8.0).

Body proportions as percentage of head length: Eye diameter 22.4–25.0 (23.8), snout length 24.1–25.8 (24.9), interorbital space 23.1–25.9 (24.6), upper jaw leng:h 40.0–43.9 (42.3), lower jaw leng:h 46.2–51.3 (49.0).

The sagitta agrees with the description given by Trewavas (1977) and Mohan (1981). The colouration is also agreeing with the description of Rao (1974) (Fig. 1).

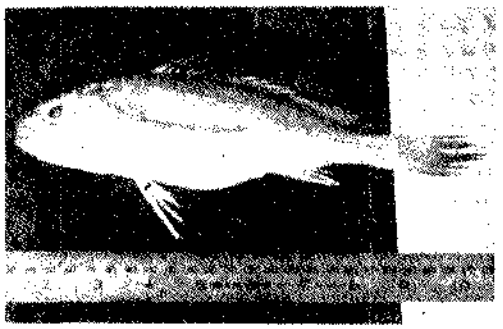

Fig. 1. A female specimen of *Atrobucca nibe* (T.L. 271 mm) caught from off Veraval.

Distributed in East China Sea, southern Korea, Taiwan, East coast of India, and northwest coast of India (Veraval).

The size range of males was 187–238 mm with an average weight of 91.3 g. In the case of females size range was 197–282 mm with an average weight of 115.2 g. Trewavas (1977) reported that females grew bigger than males, which is in agreement with the present observations.

The sex ratio between females and males was 4:1. The maturity conditions of the adult females was observed as resting 6.25%, maturing 12.5% and gravid 81.25%. It is reported by Trewavas (1977) that spawning is probably in shallow water and this may be the reason, that the gravid shoal migrated to the inshore water off Veraval.

Stomachs of 20 specimens were analysed to study the food and feeding conditions of which 30% of stomachs were 1/4 full or having traces of food components and 70% the stomachs were found to be empty; *Acetes* spp. was the only component.

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