ON THE OCCURRENCE OF 'WAHOO', *ACANTHOCYBIUM SOLANDRI* IN THE HOOKS AND LINE CATCHES OFF LAWSONS BAY, VISAKHAPATNAM*

The occurrence of *Acanthocybium solandri* (Cuvier and Valenciennes) in the hooks and line catches off Lawsons Bay was first noticed in February, 1988 (two specimens) and subsequently in March (one specimen) and December (two specimens) of the same year. Afterwards four more specimens landed by the hooks and line came under observation on 29th October, 1990, of which the smallest one was collected, photographed and the characteristics were noted.

The specimen examined had a fork length of 99.5 cm. (T. L. 104.5 cm, S. L. 91.8 cm and depth 7.06 cm) and weighed 5.6 kg (Fig. 1). The cleft of the mouth reached beyond the anterior end of the eye, almost to below the middle of the eye. The specimen was a female with the ovary in II stage, 31.5 cm long and weighing 32.5 g. The gut was half full (vol. 35 ml.) containing digested fish remains.

Fig. 1. *Acanthocybium solandri* (C & V) entire specimen. (Some of the parasitic copepods attached to the body, appearing like tick marks, are indicated by arrows).

The specimen was infested with the parasitic copepod of the genus *Lernaeenicus*, almost similar to *L. seeri* (Kirtisinghe, 1934). The copepod was found attached to the muscles all over, predominantly on the ventro-lateral side beyond the pectorals. However, a narrow space at the lower dorso-lateral region (excluding the caudal peduncle), the pre-dorsal, the head and the ventro-lateral region below the pectorals were the areas spared by the parasite. The same parasite was observed on the specimens examined by the authors earlier.

At Lawsons Bay, seer fishes from as much as 22.5% of the estimated annual average landings by all gears. *Scomberomorus guttatus* (15.8%), caught both by hooks and lines as well as bottom-set gill nets and *S. commerson* (6.7%), caught mainly by hooks and lines are the two important species. *S. koreanus* is rarely caught in hooks and line while *S. lineolatus* occurs very rarely in other gears. Some details on the fishery of seer fishes by hooks and line off Lawsons Bay, Visakhapatnam are given in Table 1.

According to an earlier report, the seasonal abundance in the landings of *S. guttatus* at Lawsons Bay and in other localities along the east coast is closely related to the circulation pattern of the water in the Bay of Bengal. *A. solandri* is stated to be wide spread in circum-tropical seas but nowhere abundant. Being an epipelagic oceanic species, frequently solitary or forming small loose aggregations rather than compact schools, *A. solandri* does not form a fishery as

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TABLE 1. *Some details on the fishery of Seer fishes by hooks & line off Lawsons Bay, Visakhapatnam*

Species	*S. guttatus*	*S. commerson*	*S. koreanus*	*A. solandri*
Period of abundance or occurrence	Apr. - Jul. Nov. - Jan.	Jan. - Mar.	May - Jul.	Oct. - Mar.
Hooks & baits	No. 4 & 5 Sardines or Anchovies	No. 1 Ribbon fish	No. 4 & 5 Sardines or Anchovies	No. 1 Ribbon fish
Depth of operation of gear	20-50 m	20-50 m	20-50 m	36-50 m
General size range	30-75 cm	40-250 cm	40-100 cm	100-200 cm
Average price range per kg	Rs. 24-30	Rs. 28-32	Rs. 24-30	Rs. 28-32
% in the annual average hooks & line landings *	27.2	12.1	Not signi-ficant	Not signi-ficant
Local name	'Vanjaram'	'Konemu'	'Balla' 'Vanjaram'	'Pallapu' 'Konemu'

* Source : MFIS No. 6, p. 10 - 13.

such anywhere. From the published account it would appear that *A. solandri* is relatively denser in distribution in the equatorial Indo-Pacific waters.

The occurrence of *A. solandri* off the north coast of Andhra as reported now confines to the period October - March. This is the period when a strong surface current from the Malasian region enters the south-east corner of Bay of Bengal, bringing the equatorial Indo-Pacific waters. 'Wahoo' probably enters the Bay of Bengal along with this current and moves along with the prevaling currents on the east coast of India during October - March.

Fig. 2. Head portion of the above specimen showing the snout being as long as the rest of the head and posterior end of maxilla concealed under preorbital bone.