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Rare occurrence of diamond back squid *Thysanoteuthis rhombus* (Troschel, 1867) off Chennai coast

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A single female specimen of diamond back squid *Thysanoteuthis rhombus* (Troschel, 1857) locally called 'thalan kadama' was recorded for the first time in the landings of Kasimedu Fishing Harbour on 9.7.2008. The squid was caught in the drift gill net operated off north Chennai at a depth of around



Fig. 1. Dorsal view of the squid *Thysanoteuthis rhombus*

100 m. The squid was 630 mm in mantle length and weighed 6 kg. The specimen was sold for Rs.1,500/- at the landing centre. The landing of the same species with a mantle length of 700 mm in Veerapandipatinam, near Tuticorin has been reported by Kasim *et al.* (1994).

T. rhombus is an epipelagic oceanic rhomboid squid of bright red colour having a thick cylindrical muscular mantle, wide anteriorly and tapering gradually posteriorly to a blunt end. The fins are long occupying the entire length of the mantle on lateral side. The fin is diamond shaped, being broader in the middle and tapering at both anterior and posterior ends. The head is shorter and the eyes are prominent. The outer lateral arms are the longest and the inner arms are the shortest provided with a crest like muscular projection at the base of each arm. The other arms are intermediary in length devoid of any structures. All the arms possess two

rows of suckers and sucker rings with sharp teeth. The morphometric measurements of the specimen are given in Table 1.

The squid inhabit warm tropical and partially sub-tropical waters. It occupies near surface waters during night and migrates to mid waters during day time and often occurs alone or in pairs. There is detailed information on the distribution of this species from the Atlantic, Pacific and Japanese waters.

Table 1. Morphometric measurements of the diamond back squid *Thysanoteuthis rhombus* caught off Chennai coast

| Morpometric characters | Measurements (mm) |
|------------------------|-------------------|
| Mantle length, dorsal | 630 |
| Mantle length, ventral | 610 |
| Mantle width | 550 |
| Fin width | 200 |
| Head length | 110 |
| Width of head | 150 |
| Funnel length | 75 |
| Eye diameter | 40 |
| Tentacle length | 600 |