

ON THE OCCURRENCE OF *NEMIPTERUS METOPIAS*
(BLEEKER, 1852) (NEMIFTERIDAE, PISCES)
FROM THE SOUTH WEST COAST OF INDIA

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ABSTRACT

The occurrence of *Nemipterus metopias* (Bleeker) in the seas around India is reported for the first time based on five specimens ranging from 221 to 256 mm in total length collected from hook-and-line catches at Vizhinjam (Latitude 8°21' 30" N, Longitude 76° 56' 15" S).

The species of *Nemipterus* so far reported to occur in the seas around India are, *Nemipterus marginatus* (Valenciennes), *N. hexodon* (Quoy and Gaimard), *N. japonicus* (Bloch), *N. luteus* (Schneider), *N. mesoprion* (Bleeker), *N. tolu* (Val.) and *N. delagoae* Smith (Day 1878, Weber and De Beaufort 1936, and Muilhy Mas). The present authors collected five specimens of *Nemipterus metopias* (Sleeker) the occurrence of which has not been recorded so far from Indian waters, from Vizhinjam during February 1980 from the catches by hooks and lines.

1857, Achtste bijdr.

up to posterior extremity of the orbit but not the pupil; the second band starts from the front part of the upper jaw and extends backward to a point in line with the hind end of the orbit. Six faint yellow horizontal lines along the body, the first one running just below the lateral line. A broad yellow band, present on the ventral surface between isthmus, base of pelvic fin bifurcates into two narrow bands below the base of pelvic, and passes alongside the anal to meet at the base of the caudal fin. Dorsal fin, pale yellow, with a narrow yellow margin immediately followed by a narrow pinkish band, and a bluish band along the base. Pelvic fins, whitish with yellowish axillary area and axillary scales. Pectoral fins, pale pinkish with a pinkish base. Anal fin, whitish with a row of yellow blotches (one blotch each between two spines or rays). Caudal fin, pink with deep red at the middle of the fork, distal part of upper lobe of caudal and its filament, yellow. In fish preserved in 5% formalin, body colours faded gradually.

Remarks: *N. metapias* resembles *Nemipterus japonicus* and *N. luteus*, in having the tip of upper lobe of caudal fin drawn into a filament which is bright yellow.

It differs from *Nemipterus japonicus* in not having the bright orange red blotch just below and near origin of lateral line and yellow lines on anal fin which forms reticulate pattern, but has single median row of yellow spots on anal fin. Body of *N. metapias* is very slender being less than the head depth, while in *N. japonicus* body is as deep or deeper than head.

N. metapias differs from *N. luteus* in not having the first and second spines of dorsal fin very close together forming a single long filament of bright yellow in colour. *N. metapias* has two bright yellow bands on head which are absent in *Nemipterus luteus* and *N. japonicus*.

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