

# Record of the rare serranid fish Boulenger's anthias *Sacura boulengeri* (Heemstra, 1973) from Mumbai waters

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The family Serranidae comprising of 62 genera with 449 species is divided into three subfamilies namely, Anthiinae, Epinephelinae (tribes Epinephelini, Nipponini, Liopropomatini, Diploprioni, Grammistini) and Serraninae. Among the genera, *Epinephelus* has the largest number of species and are the most commercially important. The Anthiinae, comprising fairy basslets and sea goldies, though relatively smaller and very colourful, do not make good aquarium candidates as they are exclusively planktivorous. The Boulenger's anthias *Sacura boulengeri*, a very rare anthias, was previously known only from six specimens, five collected from Muscat (Gulf of Oman) in 1963 and one from Sindh (Pakistan) in 2004. The lectotype and paralectotypes of *S. boulengeri* are preserved at the British Museum of Natural History (No.1889.4.15.15 and 1889. 4.15.15). Between the period 2005-2006, *S. boulengeri* was reported from several landings in India, namely, Mumbai, Mangalore and Neendakara (Kerala). The specimens collected in Mumbai were landed at Sassoon Docks in the post-monsoon season on a single occasion (Fig. 1). On enquiry it was learnt that they had been caught from the mangrove area near Mahul by gillnet. All seven specimens observed were males as identified by their characteristic bright colouration of golden, mauve and lavender. As the specimens were freshly collected, their



Fig. 1. Male *Sacura boulengeri* (Heemstra, 1975) collected from landings at Sassoon Dock, Mumbai

characteristic colouration was clearly noticeable. The body of this fish is ovate, laterally compressed, with a lunate caudal fin. The third spine of the dorsal fin is very prolonged as are also the 3<sup>rd</sup> and the 4<sup>th</sup> dorsal soft rays. Two specimens were collected and brought to the laboratory for morphometric and meristic analysis. Comparative morphometrics of *S. boulengeri* from various localities are given in Table 1.

The records from India can be considered a range extension of the species. The fact that it has not been recorded earlier may possibly be because of the comparative rarity of the species itself.

Table1. Comparative morphometrics of *S. bouleengeri* collected from various localities

Parameter	Location				
	Muscat (1979)	Sindh (2004)	Mangalore (2006)	Mumbai 1 (2005)	Mumbai 2 (2005)
Nos. examined	03	01	01	01	01
Sex	Male	Male	Male	Male	Male
Greatest body depth (% SL)	41- 43	41.7	41.8	41.9	42
Head length (% SL)	42- 43	39.2	44.0	35	37
Pectoral fin length (% SL)	29-32	29.2	29.2	33	32
Pelvic fin length (% SL)	25-29	28.3	29.2	24.1	23.7
Caudal peduncle length (% SL)	20-22	20.8	20.3	15.9	14.7
Caudal peduncle depth (% SL)	12 - 14	12.5	12.3	13.1	11.4
First dorsal spine length (% SL)	6.4-7.3	5.8	6	6.1	6.5
Second dorsal spine length (% SL)	9.7-11	7.5	9.9	8.9	9.2
Third dorsal spine length (% SL)	52-66	55	50.8	53	54.6
Fourth dorsal spine length (% SL)	13-15	14.2	13.6	13.2	14.6
Third dorsal soft ray length (% SL)	50-52	47.5	52.5	49.1	49.2
Anal fin length (% SL)	33-36	32.5	31.8	30.5	26.1
First anal spine length (% SL)	7.6-8	7.5	7.3	7.4	7.6
Second anal spine length (% SL)	14-17	15	14.6	14.1	14.4
Second anal soft ray length (% SL)	26-29	25	27.8	24.3	27.1
Pelvic fin length (% SL)	15-18	15	15.2	15.7	17.2
Snout length (% HL)	20-21	21.3	20.4	20.3	20.9
Orbit length (% HL)	26-28	27.7	27.6	22.3	24.2
Inter-orbital width (% HL)	20-22	23.4	22	22	23.3
Post-orbital distance (%HL)	53-56	53.5	57.2	63.1	63.3
Upper jaw length (% HL)	43-44	42.6	42.3	45.3	41
Maxilla depth (% HL)	14-16	17.3	16.3	16.9	17.1
Gill rakers (Upper)	14-16	N.S.*	12	12	12
Gill rakers (Lower)	30-33	N.S.*	27	27	27
Dorsal fin X, 14	X, 14	X, 14	X, 14	X, 14	X, 14
Anal fin	III, 7	III, 7	III, 7	III, 7	III, 7