

New records of two finfish species from Indian waters

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Two species of fishes, namely *Ablabys binotatus* (Family Tetrarogidae) and *Rhinopias eschmeyer* (Family Scorpaenidae) were recorded in trawl (Roller madi) landings from the Gulf of Mannar, south-east of India, which are the first reports from India.

Ablabys binotatus (Peters, 1855) collected from the coral reef areas (Fig.1) is dark brown in colour, with white blotch on body above pectoral fin and characterized by the presence of 15 dorsal spines, 8 dorsal soft rays, 3 anal spines and 5 anal soft rays.

The systematic position of this species is:

Order : Scorpaeniformes
Family : Tetrarogidae
Genus : *Ablabys* Kaup, 1873
Species : *Ablabys binotatus* (Peters, 1855)

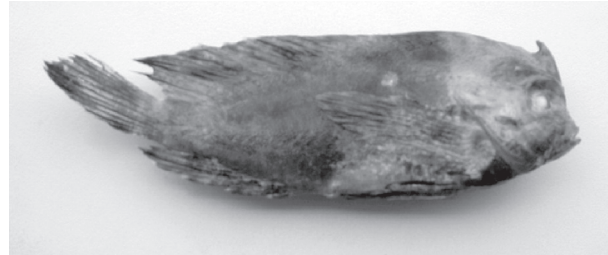


Fig. 1. *Ablabys binotatus*

The specimen has a Standard length of 87 mm and body depth of 33.22 mm. It is recorded earlier from Maldives, Mozambique, South Africa and Tanzania. Synonyms of this species are *Amblyapistus binotata*, *A. binotatus*, *A. marleyi*, *A. taenionotus* and *Apistus binotatus*.

Rhinopias eschmeyeri Condé, 1977 collected from the coral reef areas (Fig. 2) during the present study is reddish in colour, has 12 dorsal spines, 9 dorsal rays, 3 anal spines and 5 anal rays.



Fig. 2. *Rhinopias eschmeyeri*

The systematic position of this species is:

Order : Scorpaeniformes
Family : Scorpaenidae
Subfamily : Scorpaeninae
Genus : *Rhinopias* Gill, 1905
Species : *Rhinopias eschmeyeri* Condé, 1977

Two specimens were collected from Gulf of Mannar, the standard lengths of which were 122.5 mm and 128 mm. The species is distinguished by the presence of one small black spot, slightly greater than pupil diameter, in the middle of the membrane between the seventh and eighth dorsal-fin soft rays; dorsal profile of snout curved, initially convex, then deeply concave; interorbital space deep, occipital pit moderately deep; 16 pectoral-fin rays, with the distal margins of the spinous portion of the dorsal fin and soft-rayed portions of the dorsal, pelvic, anal and caudal fins very weakly notched, membrane of the spinous portion of the dorsal fin notably fleshy, tips of each caudal-fin ray divided into four branches and dorsal-fin spines relatively soft with tips bending easily under slight pressure. This species is reported earlier from Australia, Indonesia, Japan, Mauritius, Philippines, Reunion, Seychelles and Vietnam. The synonyms of this species are *Rhinopias eschemeyeri* and *R. frondosa*.