

# **New distributional record of the cuttlefish *Sepia arabica* (Massy, 1916) from the east coast of India**

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Due to the growing demand in the international market, cephalopods are exploited all along the Indian coast. With the increased exploitation rate and

expansion of fishing grounds, new species of cephalopods are being reported from Indian waters. Among the 60 species of cephalopods species from

the Indian waters; only 15 are commercially exploited (Silas *et al.*, 1985). A new species of the cuttlefish, *Sepia arabica* (Massy 1916) was observed in trawl landings at Kasimedu Fishing Harbour on 13<sup>th</sup> October, 2011 (Fig. 1). This is the first report on occurrence of *S. arabica* from the east coast of India. Dorsal mantle length (DML) of the specimens ranged from 45-55 mm (Table 1). *S. arabica* is a demersal cuttlefish species inhabiting 80 to 272 m depth range and geographically distributed in the Indian Ocean, Red Sea, Gulf of Aden, Persian Gulf, western and southern coasts of India and Lakshadweep Islands.



Fig. 1. Dorsal view of *Sepia arabica* collected from Chennai.

Arrow points the head with large, fleshy ear-shaped projections posterior to eyes which looks like a pair of ear rings (key character for this species identification)

### Diagnostic features

Mantle oval, fins widest in posterior third; anterior origin posterior to mantle margin, posteriorly with wide gap between them. Head slender, narrow than mantle. Male and female arms subequal in length. Arm suckers tetraserial in both sexes, suckers small and widely spaced. Arm sucker rims smooth.

Hectocotylus present on left ventral arm, with greatly reduced suckers, much smaller than normal suckers. Tentacular club is crescent shaped, small; with 5 or 6 small similar sized suckers in transverse rows. Head with large, fleshy, ear-shaped projections posterior to eyes. Reddish purple body colour, Head with chromatophores concentrated over eye orbits. Dorsal mantle chromatophores are irregularly distributed in patches; base of fins on posterior half with 10 to 12 patches of concentrated reddish purple chromatophores. Cuttle bone outline lanceolate; bone bluntly rounded anteriorly, very narrow, strongly tapered posteriorly; recurved ventrally; granulose dorsally; dorsal median rib indistinct, broadens anteriorly (Fig. 2).



Fig. 2. Ventral and dorsal view of cuttle bone of *Sepia arabica* collected from Kasimedu Fishing Harbour

Table 1. Mantle length, weight and sex of *Sepia arabica* collected from Chennai

Dorsal mantle length (cm)	Weight (g)	Sex
45	16	Male
55	23	Female