

## First record of grooved razor fish *Centriscus scutatus* Linnaeus, 1758 from Visakhapatnam waters

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One specimen of the grooved razor fish, *Centriscus scutatus* Linnaeus, 1758, was collected at Visakhapatnam Fisheries Harbour from the discards of single day trawler operated at 30 m depth on March 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2012. Occurrence of *Centriscus scutatus* (Fig. 1) is reported for the first time from the Visakhapatnam waters.

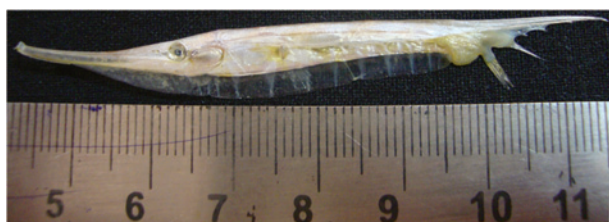


Fig. 1. *Centriscus scutatus* from Visakhapatnam

The species, one among the known two species of this genus belonging to the Centricidae family of the order Syngnathiformes, is easily distinguished by the sharp-edged belly and shrimp-like appearance. It has a straight, sleek, razor-like body with three dorsal spines, one long sharp spine displaced at the rear end of the body and two shorter spines, rest of the dorsal fin and the caudal fin present at the ventral side of the fish. The snout is long and narrow, and the small mouth at the end has no teeth. Lateral line is dusky, continuous and has no interruption. Eight silvery crossbars were observed on the ventral plates. The specimen was a juvenile. Morphometric measurements taken from the sample obtained is presented in Table 1. The specimen collected is deposited at the Marine Museum at Visakhapatnam Regional Centre of CMFRI.

*Centriscus scutatus* is widely distributed in coral reefs and inshore habitats throughout the tropical Indo-Pacific. The species has been first reported in India from the Gulf of Mannar, Mandapam during 1975 and from Lakshadweep Islands and from Kerala. Juveniles of 30 mm total length and longer are said to occur in the coral rich areas of lagoon

reefs, particularly among live thickets of stag horn coral (*Acropora* sp.), in seagrass beds and murky outer reef areas with patch reefs. Adults are more common offshore than inshore, their presumed habitat being steep outer reef slopes and lagoon reefs. Typically they are solitary or paired, but have also been noted in groups of 3 - 7 individuals. Recently it has been recorded from off Singarayakonda, Andhra Pradesh coast, from a depth of 30 m.

Table 1. Morphometric measurements of *Centriscus scutatus*

Characters	Measurement (mm)
Total length	57
Standard length	54
Head length	26
Snout length	15
Eye diameter	2
Interorbital distance	2
Preorbital length	19
Gape of mouth	1
Dorsal fin base	1
Dorsal fin length	5
Pectoral fin length	5
Anal fin base	1.5
Anal fin length	5
Body depth	9
Weight (g)	0.2928

The grooved razor fish is remarkable for its strange body shape and swimming habits. Unlike other fishes, they swim vertically and in a synchronised manner with snout pointing downwards. They feed on small benthic/planktonic invertebrates, mainly crustaceans. Grooved razor fishes are not used as food but usually processed into fishmeal and also collected by aquarium hobbyists.