New record of kobi cuttle fish, *Sepia kobiensis* Hoyle, 1885 from the Bay of Bengal, off Karaikal coast of south India

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On 16th October 2012, kobi cuttle fish, *Sepia kobiensis* were caught by trawl gears operated along the Karaikal coast (lat 10^0 49' 11.01" N; long: 79^0 43' 79.52"E) of south India at a depth of around 100-200 m . The specimens were identified as *Sepia kobiensis* Hoyle, 1885 based on the identification characters as described in Jereb and Roper 2005 (Fig. 1 and 2). This species has not been reported earlier and therefore considered as a new record to the inshore waters of Bay of Bengal along Karaikal coast. It is a demersal cuttlefish inhabiting up to 160 m depth and has been found to occur in Mumbai waters along the west coast of India.The occurrence of the species in the fishery along Mumbai coast is highly seasonal, constituting a fishery during October-December with peak landings in November.

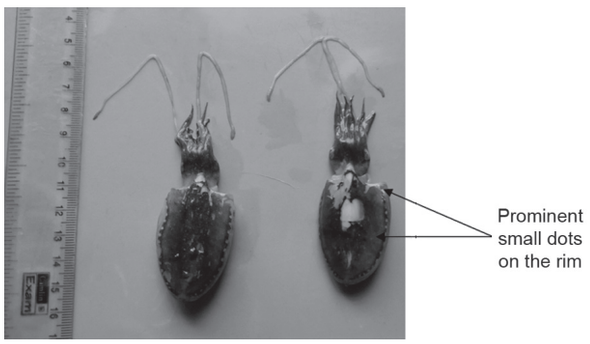

Fig. 1. Dorsal view of *Sepia kobiensis* caught off Karaikal coast

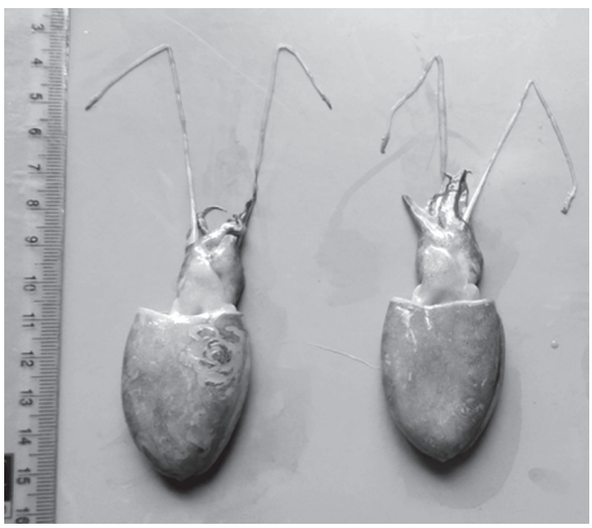

Fig. 2. Ventral view of *Sepia kobiensis* caught off Karaikal coast

Taxonomic position and distribution

Class: Cephalopoda, Subclass: Coleoidea, Infraclass: Decapodiformes, Superorder: Decabrachia, Order: Sepiida, Family: Sepiidae, Genus: *Sepia,* Species: *kobiensis,* Hoyle, 1885.

The species is known to be distributed worldwide in Western Pacific: South China Sea, East China Sea, and Yellow Sea to southern and central Japan (Jereb and Roper 2005).

Description

The mantle is elliptical with a width 45-50% of the mantle length. The antero-dorsal margin is acutely and triangularly protruded, while the ventral margin is gently concave. The fins are narrow, starting below the mantle opening and is about 80% of mantle length. The funnel is slender, reaches the base of the ventral arms and the funnel valve is short and conical in shape. Swimming membrane is poorly developed in the ventral arms. The arms are short, attenuate and sub-equal in size. The arm suckers are globular quadric serial in size with those in the median rows larger than the marginal ones. Left arm in males is hectocotylised and suckers are greatly reduced in size. The oral surface is hollowed out and transversely ridged. Tentacles are long and thin, tentacular club short and narrow. Tentacular suckers are arranged in eight rows transversely with five suckers of the third longitudinal row much larger than the others. Swimming keel is broad extending proximally beyond base of club and the protective membrane is poorly developed.

The cuttlebone is lanceolate and large in the striated zone area (Fig. 3a and b). Shell taper towards the posterior end, acuminate at the anterior end and has a very narrow chitinous margin. The dorsal surface has faint median rib, whereas the ventral surface has a median groove forming a broader depression in the anterior part of the loculus. The inner cone has narrow lateral limbs and the posterior portion is elongated. A cup-like process formed by the outer cone surrounds the inner cone. The spine is long and directed upwards. The animal is dark brown in colour with the exception only in the periphery and the fins, where the chromatophores are very minute and distally placed with prominent small dots on the rim. The ventral side is faint pinkish in colour due to fewer chromatophores developed.

Fig. 3. Dorsal view (a) and Ventral view (b) of cuttle bone of *Sepia kobiensis* caught off Karaikal coast