

On the occurrence of *Iniistius pavo* (Valenciennes, 1840) from Gujarat

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Iniistius pavo (Valenciennes, 1840) commonly known as peacock wrasse belongs to the family Labridae. Distributed in Chagos, Kenya, Mozambique, Seychelles, Somalia, South Africa and lately reported from Lakshadweep, the species is not reported hitherto from the mainland of India. Most species (82%) are found in the Indo-Pacific region, with Australia having the largest labrid fish fauna (about 33% of the species and 70% of the genera). This species usually occurs solitary in lagoon and seaward reef areas with fine to loose, coarse sand bottoms at depths of 7 to 30 m. The fish can dive into the sand when threatened. Wrasse are active only during day time, burrowing in the sand and sleeping in rock or coral shelters at night. The present specimen was observed for the first time at Veraval.

Only a single specimen (Fig. 1) of the species caught by hook and line was landed on 5th January, 2013 and collected from Veraval landing centre. As per the information collected from fishermen, the fish was caught, by a multiday trawler of Veraval which was fishing for bigger size ribbon fish from the Angria bank off Ratnagiri coast which is a coral reef area and at the same time the fishermen operated the hook and line to get some fish. The species was identified



Fig 1. *Iniistius pavo* (Valenciennes, 1840) landed at Veraval

by the presence of first 2 dorsal spines, which was not connected to rest of fin by a membrane, absence of scales on cheek, opercle and lower jaw and a prominent black spot above lateral line below sixth dorsal spine. Body colour was pale blue to green, with 3 or 4 poorly defined broad, green vertical bars on sides. Dorsal side of head compressed into a knife-like edge, the profile with an extreme convex curve above eyes; snout very steep, small mouth with 2 large canines situated anteriorly in each jaw and interrupted lateral line. The detailed morphometric and meristic characters are given in Table 1. The collected specimen was preserved and kept in the museum of Veraval regional centre.

Table 1. Morphometric and meristic characters of *Iniistius pavo* (Valenciennes, 1840) collected from Veraval

Characters	Measurements (mm)
Total length	32.0
Standard length	28.0
Head length	8.5
Pectoral fin length	6.0
Pelvic fin length	5.5
Maxillary length	2.0
Eye diameter	0.8
Inter orbital length	2
Anal fin length	2.5
Base of anal fin	11
Base of pectoral fin	1.5
Base of pelvic fin	0.5
Base of dorsal fin	19.0
Body depth	11.5
Depth of caudal peduncle	4
Dorsal fin count	IX+12
Anal fin count	III+12
Pectoral fin count	0+11 (2 unbranched +10 branched)
Pelvic fin count	0+5
Caudal fin count	11
Weight (g)	598