

**A NOTE ON THE OCCURRENCE OF A LARGE SIZED
SPOTTED BUTTERFISH *SCATOPHAGUS ARGUS* (LINNAEUS) AT RAJPARA (GUJARAT)**

ABSTRACT

The occurrence of a large sized specimen of *Scatophagus argus* (Linnaeus), measuring 334 mm and weighing 1.2 kg is reported from Rajpara landing centre on the Saurashtra Coast. During some of the fishing trips the species was observed nibbling the filamentous algae attached to the boat.

Scatophagus argus (Linnaeus) popularly called as spotted butter fish is widely distributed in the tropical Indo-Pacific region. It is also known to enter into backwaters and estuaries (Day, 1958; Munro, 1955). Though it does not constitute any fishery, its occurrence has been recorded from both the coasts of India (Bal and Pradhan, 1951; Nair, 1952). During 1972-75 this species was observed by the author to occur in trawl net landings in small

quantities at Sassoon Dock (Maharashtra). This species was known to attain a maximum size of 304 mm (Misra, 1959).

On 8th December, 1982 a specimen measuring 334 mm and weighing 1.2 kg was caught by 'dol' net at 27 metre depth. The meristic counts are: D 11/15, C 15, A 4/12, V 1/5 and P 15. The morphometric measurements are: total length 334 mm, depth of body 195 mm, length

of head 90 mm, eye diameter 18 mm and interorbital space 56 mm. As evident from meristic counts there are only 15 pectoral fin rays against 20 described by Day (1958). Similarly there are 12 anal fin rays against 14-16 described. This may be attributed to the fusion of some of the rays due to old age. However other characters were in conformity with descriptions of earlier authors.

This species is known to feed on fouling organism and in many fishing trips a number of fishes were observed nibbling on the filamentous algae attached to the sides of the boat.

The author is thankful to Shri K.V. Narayana Rao for critical perusal of the manuscript.

*Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute,
Cochin - 682 018.*

MOHAMMAD ZAFAR KHAN

REFERENCES

- BAL, D. V. AND L. B. PRADHAN 1951. *J. Univ. Bombay*, 20 B: 15.
- DAY, F. 1958. *The fishes of India*, 1: 114-115.
- MISRA, K. S. 1955. *Rec. Indian Mus.*, 57 (1-4): 282-283.
- MUNRO, I. A. S. 1955. *The Marine and Freshwater fishes of Ceylon*. pp. 169.
- NAIR, R. V. 1952. *Proc. Indian Acad. Sci.*, 35 B (5): 181-208.