

# Observations of rarely recorded deep-water Snappers



*Etelis coruscans*



*Pristipomoides zonatus*

Deep-water fish species, particularly those belonging to the Lutjanidae family, are rare in the fisheries landings as they are only caught rarely, due to the very few fishing boats operating in their deep habitats they frequent. Any landings recorded therefore provide valuable insights into their distribution, biology, and potential ecological significance. During routine sampling at the Cochin Fisheries Harbour (9.9391°N, 76.2627°E) in April 2023, an unusual catch comprising three individuals of deep-water longtail red snapper (*Etelis coruscans*) and a single specimen of oblique-banded snapper (*Pristipomoides zonatus*) was recorded. These were recorded from a hook and line operation at a depth range of 130-

200 meters. The catch composition also included species such as *Pristipomoides filamentosus*, *Aprion virescens*, and various species of Lethrinids, suggesting that the demersal fish community in this depth zone is dominated by snappers and pig-face breams. *Etelis coruscans* is a slender, pink to reddish jobfish characterized by a small head, prominent eyes, and a deeply forked caudal fin. The dorsal fin is notably incised between the spinous and soft portions. The specimens recorded in this study had total lengths of 68.6, 68.7, and 72.4 cm, indicating mature individuals. The oblique-banded snapper is distinguishable by its reddish to pink body with oblique yellow bars and yellow-tinted dorsal and caudal fins, while the

other fins remain pink. A single specimen measuring 44.8 cm in total length was observed in the current catch. Both these species are distributed widely across the tropical and subtropical waters of the Indo-Pacific. These sporadic landings of *E. coruscans* and *P. zonatus* indicate the presence of these deep-water fishes on the southwest coast, which have limited deep-sea fishing activities. The long-lived and slow-growing species like *E. coruscans*, are reported to live for over 50 years. Documenting these fish occurrences will help to develop a database on deep-water fish populations.

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