

New species of deep-sea 'octopus squid' found

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SCIENTISTS at the Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute (CMFRI) have found a new species of deep-sea squid in the Arabian Sea. The species, scientifically named *Taningia silasii* (Indian octopus squid), is the second confirmed species of the globally rare genus *Taningia* and has been formally described in the international journal 'Marine Biodiversity'.

The specimen was collected from nearly 390m depth off the Kollam coast. Measuring 45cm in length, the squid belongs to the family of Octopoteuthidae, the adults of this species are known for their distinctive absence of tentacles, though they are true deep-sea

squids. Principal scientist Geetha Sasikumar and technical officer Sajikumar K K led the research.

"Until now, *Taningia danae* found in Atlantic waters was the only known species in this genus. DNA barcoding showed more than 11% genetic divergence from the Atlantic species, confirming the specimen as a distinct species," said Geetha. "Although called the 'octopus squid', it is a squid that possesses only eight arms and lacks the two long tentacles typically seen in other squid species. Members of this family can also attain large sizes," said Sajikumar.

The species has been named in honour of marine biologist and former director of CMFRI E G Silas.

