



Short Communication

FIRST REPORT OF A FISH FROM FAMILY: ANTENNARIIDAE (*ANTENNARIUS HISPIDUS*) FROM DIGHA COASTAL WATERS, ON THE EAST COAST OF INDIA

INTRODUCTION

Digha (Lat 21°36' Long 87°30') is one of the major marine fish landing stations of the east coast of India. Considering the importance of fish faunal resources, several efforts were made regarding incidences of ichthyofauna of region. The most recent compilation of ichthyofauna of the region contributes 212 species from 145 genera & 88 families (Chatterjee *et al*, 2000). There were also previous reports of 238 species from 72 families (Manna and Goswami, 1985; Goswami, 1992). The consistent efforts from this Centre contributes further few new families in this region (Yennawar and Tudu, 2010; Yennawar *et al.*, unpublished). During the local surveys for ornamental faunal studies in the Centre, the authors came across one fish species which after thorough observations of distinguishing features was identified as *Antennarius hispidus* (Bloch and Schneider, 1801). This species was not reported from this coast previously. The present paper added abundance of one more new family Antennariidae in the area and expands the distribution of *Antennarius hispidus* till northernmost extreme of east coast of India.

Class Actinopterygii

Order Lophiiformes

Family ANTENNARIIDAE

Antennarius hispidus (Bloch & Schneider, 1801)

1801. *Lophius hispidus* Bloch & Schneider, *Syst. Ichth.*: 142

1986. *Antennarius hispidus*, Pietsch, in Smith & Heemstra, *Smith's Sea Fishes*: 367, pi.13, Fig. 102.4.

MATERIALS EXAMINED

1 Ex, SL. 86mm, Collected from: Hospital Ghat, Digha, Reg.No.F772. The specimen was collected in live condition and after detailed morphometric

data collection the specimen was liberated in the aquarium tank for display.

DIAGNOSTIC CHARACTERS

D III, 12; C 9; A 7; P 10; V 6; first and second dorsal spines were of almost equal length and the first one with a large tuft of filaments; second spine curved posteriorly with a narrow membranous connection to the surface of head; third dorsal spine curved posteriorly; Pterygiophore supporting dorsal spines extending slightly beyond the upper jaw; Head, body, and tail densely covered with generally bifid spines making the skin rough; eyes very small; Mouth almost vertical. Sharp, pointed teeth in a single row in sides of upper and lower jaw; Illicium (rod) striped and about the length of 2nd spine. Esca (lure, bait) with large oval-shaped tuft with numerous slender filaments; Colour of the body yellow to dark brown with roughly parallel dark stripes, some radiating from the eye; belly without stripes.

REMARK

Antennarius hispidus (Hispid or Shaggy Frogfish) belongs to the *Antennarius striatus* group (Pitsch &



Fig.1 *Antennarius hispidus* collected from Digha coastal waters.

Grobecker, 1987). This frogfish is sometimes mistaken as *Antennarius striatus*, which has an esca (lure, bait) that looks like a worm and this frogfish has a short lure with a large fuzzy ball-like esca. These fishes may couple dim luminescence from their bait organ for attracting small sized pray and evade the attention of large predators (Ramaiah & Chandramohan, 1992). The species differs from *A. indicus* in not having any pigmented dark ocelli in the body and having no black bars in anal fin & having some darkly pigmented streaks radiating from the eyes (Pitsch & Grobecker, 1987).

HABITAT

These fishes inhabit muddy habitat either deep or offshore regions (Kuitert & Tono-zuka) and also in shallow rocky and coral reef zones (Lieske & Myers).

DISTRIBUTION

The species is distributed through Indo-West Pacific: East Africa, India, and Malaysia to the Moluccas, north to Taiwan, south to northern Australia. Single record from Fiji.

From Indian waters the species is reported from Maharashtra coast (Ramaiah & Chandramohan, 1992), Chennai coast (Krishnan *et al.*, 2007); Andhra coast (Barman *et al.*, 2004); Orissa-coast (Barman *et al.*, 2007).

This report suggests that the species is distributed through out the East coast of India.

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