



Short Communication

OCCURRENCE OF PENNAT CORAL FISH, *HENIOCHUS ACUMINATUS* (LINNAEUS, 1758) (PERCIFORMES: CHAETODONTIDAE) ALONG DIGHA COAST, INDIA.

The family Chaetodontidae popularly known as Butterfly fish is an important aquarium fish distributed in coral reefs of tropical and subtropical regions (Allen *et al.*, 1998). They are also important bio-indicator species for assessing the health of coral reefs as they feed on coral polyps (Hourigan *et al.*, 1988). There are 128 species from 13 genera available worldwide (Froese and Pauly, 2012), out of which 38 species from 4 genera reported in Indian waters (Rajan, 2010). The genus *Heniochus* is represented by 8 species of which 7 are occurring in Indian Waters (Froese and Pauly, 2012). Previous literature of ichthyofauna of Digha coast does not have report of this family in the area (Manna & Goswami, 1985; Goswami, 1992; Talwar *et al.*, 1992 and Chatterjee *et al.*, 2000). Recently, during the local survey for ornamental fish fauna collection around Digha coast for aquarium exhibits, we incidence an example from family Chaetodontidae.

The careful observation of distinguishing features of the specimen led us to identify as *Heniochus acuminatus* (Linnaeus, 1758) long-fin banner fish. Misra (1962) was listed *Heniochus acuminatus* (Linnaeus, 1758) from West Bengal coast. But, later Talwar *et al.* (1992) in their comprehensive list of marine and estuarine fishes of West Bengal, considered presence of *Heniochus acuminatus* (Linnaeus, 1758) is doubtful and need conformation. So, this report confirms the occurrence of *Heniochus acuminatus* (Linnaeus, 1758) in West Bengal coast.

CLASSIFICATION

Phylum	CHORDATA
Class	ACTINOPTERYGII
Order	PERCIFORMES
Family	CHAETODONTIDAE

Heniochus acuminatus (Linnaeus, 1758)

1758. *Systema Naturae*, ed. 10: 272 (type locality: 'Indies').

1758. *Heniochus acuinatus* Linnaeus, *Systema Naturae*, ed. 10: 272 (type locality: 'Indies').

Material examined : Reg. No. F752; 1 ex., SL 108mm, Collected by: Dipanjan Ray; location: Digha Mohana, Date of Coll. 14.12.2010.

Distinguishing characters : D: XI, 24; A: III, 18; P: 18; V: I, 5. HL: 3.7mm, TL: 128 mm, SL: 108mm, GR: 11, LL: 46. Body compressed, elevated, sub-rhomboid. Snout short, conical, mouth opening small. Teeth villiform in jaws. Dorsal spine strong, 4th dorsal spine and its membrane long, filamentous, narrowing towards the end, reaching to beyond of caudal fin and longer than body length. Ventral fin reaches the origin of anal spine. Caudal fin truncated. Eyes diameter equal to inter orbital space. Snout with dark blotch from nostrils to tip, dark bar crosses interorbital from one eye to other eye. Body white in colour; upper part of snout and interorbital space black. Two wide black oblique anterior three dorsal spines, touches the hind margin of operculum, base of pectorals and continued to base of spinous anal and pelvic fin base; posterior one start from 5th to 7th dorsal spine to posterior part of soft anal. Soft rays of dorsal and caudal fins yellow; ventral fins black (Fig. 1). Distinguished from the very similar *Heniochus diphreutes* by the longer snout, rounded shape and longer and more angular anal fin (Rajan, 2010) and in numbers of dorsal spines.

Distribution : Distributed throughout the tropical Indo - West Pacific region. From Indian waters Andhra Pradesh (Barman *et al.*, 2004), Orissa (Barman *et al.*, 2007), Tamil Nadu (Krishnan *et al.*, 2007), Andaman and Nicobar Island (Rajan, 2010), Gujarat (Barman *et al.*, 2000), Lakshadweep (Anand & Pillai, 2003).

Remarks : This is the first ever report of *Heniochus acuminatus* (Linnaeus, 1758) the long-fin banner fish in the area. Incidence of this species, which are usually coral inhabiting, in addition to few more habitant species, shows need for further extensive study on distribution and habitat preference of this species as the locality does not have coral reef nearby.

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Fig 1: *Heniochus acuminatus* (Linnaeus, 1758) and necessary facilities for the work. DR is thankful to ZSI for offering JRF to carry out the work.

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