



Short Communication

A NOTE ON OCCURRENCE OF YELLOW-WING FLYING FISH, *CYPSILURUS POECILOPTERUS* (VALENCIENNES, 1847) FROM DIGHA, EAST COAST OF INDIA.

INTRODUCTION

Flying fishes of Family Exocoetidae is represented by 8 genera, comprising of about 67 species throughout the world (Eschmeyer, 2005). From Indian waters six species of flying fishes of genus *Cypselurus* was reported by Weber and de Beaufort (1922). Hornell (1923) reported *Cypselurus coromandelensis* from Madras and Nagapattinam as new to science. Chandi (1954) reported 4 species of genus *Cypselurus* and an undetermined species of which two were additions to the flying fish fauna of India. A recent review of flying fishes includes 6 genera comprising 14 species occurring in Indian waters including 3 from genus *Cypselurus* (Barman and Mishra, 2006). The systematic study on the fish fauna of Digha coast was carried out by Chatterjee *et al* (2000), who reported 212 species from 145 genera and 88 families, included only one species *Exocoetus volitans* Linnaeus, 1758 of flying fish from the Family Exocoetidae. Previously no flying fish was recorded by Talwar *et al.* (1992) from West Bengal coasts. During the routine collection of marine ornamental fishes we have come across a specimen of flying fish which after through observation was identified as *Cypselurus poecilopterus* (Valenciennes, 1847) which was not reported by previous workers from the West Bengal coasts.

MATERIALS EXAMINED

1 ex., location: Hospital Ghat, Digha, (21° 61'N and 87°53'E) Date: 22.09.2010, Coll.: Dr. Prasanna Yannawar & Mr. P.C. Tudu, 252 mm TL, Reg. No. ZSI/MARC-F1532.

COMMON NAME

Cypselurus poecilopterus (Valenciennes, 1847) is commonly known as Yellow-wing flying fish, Spotted flying fish and spot-wing flying fish.

SYNONYMS

1846. *Exocoetus poecilopterus*: Valenciennes, in Cuvier and Valenciennes, *Hist nat. Poiss* A9 : 112 (Type locality: new Britain Is., Bismark Archipelago)
1922. *Cypselurus poecilopterus*: Weber and de Beaufort, *Fish. Indo-Aust.archip.*, 4: 186.
2006. *Cypselurus poecilopterus*: Burman and Mishra, *Rec. zool. Surv. India, Occ. Paper No. 256* : 14

DIAGNOSIS

Body elongate and broadly cylindrical; D 13; A 9, LL 45, GR 22, SL 201mm, HL 45mm, CL 51mm, PL 131mm. Pectoral fin long, more than half of the total length of the fish reaching almost last ray of dorsal fin, with 1 unbranched and 14 branched fin rays. Body dark, iridescent blue dorsally and silvery white below (Fig. 1), ovate black spots arranged in bands on the upper part of the pectoral fin and absent in the lower part of the fin in the fresh specimen. Upper jaw not protrusible, lower jaw little shorter than the upper jaw and included beneath the upper jaw which character distinguishes the specimen as belonging to the genus *Cypselurus* and not to the genus *Cheilopogon*.



Fig.1. *Cypselurus poecilopterus* (Valenciennes, 1847)

HABITAT

Cypselurus poecilopterus (Valenciennes, 1847) is epipelagic, neritic and oceanic in habitat and is prone to emerge rapidly from the water by beating the water with the large lobe of caudal fin and glide over a long distance by means of their expanded pectoral fins.

DISTRIBUTION

The distribution of *Cypselurus poecilopterus* (Valenciennes, 1847) is scattered in the tropical Indian Ocean and Pacific Ocean. From Indian waters the species was reported earlier from Orissa and Tamilnadu states from east coast only. From Tamilnadu coast the existence of the *Cypselurus poecilopterus* (Valenciennes, 1847) was confirmed from Rameswaram by Barman *et al.* (2006). Two species of flying fishes *Exocoelus volitans* Linnaeus,

1758 and *Cypselurus poecilopterus* (Valenciennes, 1847) were reported from Orissa coast by Barman *et al.* (2007) and another species *Paraexocoetus mento* (Valenciennes, 1847) was added by Mishra *et al.* (2010). In coastal Andhra Pradesh, nine species from four genera of flying fishes of the Family Exocoetidae were reported which does not include the present species. Moreover, there is no record of occurrence of this species on the west coast of India also. The present report suggests that the distribution of *Cypselurus poecilopterus* (Valenciennes, 1847) is along the stretch of East Coast of India from West Bengal up to Tamilnadu coasts.

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