

**ON THE OCCURRENCE OF THE PLATACID FISH *TRIPTERODON
ORBIS* PLAYFAIR IN INDIAN WATERS**

ON 20-12-'60 at the fish landing centre at Kuntakkal point on Rameswaram Island facing the Gulf of Mannar two platacid fishes were noticed among specimens of *Drepane punctata* (Linnaeus), and *Ephippus orbis* (Bloch). One of these was brought to the Laboratory at the Central Marine Fisheries Research Station, Mandapam Camp and was identified as *Tripterodon orbis* Playfair hitherto known from the South African Coast from Natal to Mombasa (Smith, 1949) and Madagascar (Fourmanoir, 1957). The specimen which measures 116 mm. in standard length is a juvenile, the adult of which is known to attain 762 mm. and weigh about 20 lbs.

Subsequently I have come across two specimens of this species, 101 mm. (locality unknown, probably Gulf of Mannar) and 125 mm. (from Dhanuskodi; Gulf of Mannar) of standard length, in the reserve collection of Central Marine Fisheries Research Station Museum and a brief description of these three specimens is given below.

Tripterodon orbis Playfair

Tripterodon orbis Playfair, 1866. in Playfair R.L. and Gunther A.C.L., *The Fishes of Zanzibar*, p. 42, pi. 7 fig. 1; Smith J. L. B. 1936. *Trans. roy. Soc. S.A.*, 23: 303; 1953. *The Sea Fishes of Southern Africa*, 233, and pi. 29, fig. 578. (see for other references); Fourmanoir. P., 1957. *Mem. Inst. Scient. Madagascar*, I, (Ser. F) p. 40.

D. IX ; 20-21 ; P_x ii, 17 ; P₈.1, 5 ; A. III, i, 15-16 ; C. i, 15, i.

Head 34.5 to 35.6 ; eye 10.8 to 11.2 ; snout 19.2 to 19.8 ; interorbital distance **11.5** to 11.9 ; distance from snout to posterior nostril 13.2 to 13.9 ; first predorsal distance 60.3 to 64.8 ; second predorsal distance 84.5 to 88 ; prepectoral distance 31.9 to 34.7 ; prepelvic distance 36 to 38.6 ; preanal distance 68.4 to 69.4 ; base of spinous dorsal 30.7 to 37.6 ; base of soft dorsal 44.6 to 46.4 ; base of anal 38.8 to 39.6 ; length of longest (third) spine 51.5 to 62.9 ; height of second dorsal 25.7 to 28 ; length of pectoral 22.3 to 23.2 ; length of pelvic 34.2 to 36 ; length of anal 26.8 to 32.2 ; length of caudal 32.5 to 35.6 ; and depth of body 75.7 to 79.3 percent in standard length.

Mouth slightly protractile, preopercle and opercle scaled. Teeth tricuspid in regularly arranged rows in both jaws. Gill rakers 10, minute ; pectoral short; outer ray of pelvic prolonged, tip surpassing anal origin ; caudal slightly lunate.

Eight conspicuous vertical dark bands and other colour characteristics in general tally with the plate figure 578 given by Smith (1949).

Distribution: Natal to Mombasa along South African Coast, and Madagascar. The present record extends the distribution of the species to Rameswaram Island, Gulf of Mannar, Indian Ocean.

All the three specimens are deposited in the Central Marine Fisheries Research Station Museum, Mandapam Camp.

My thanks are due to Dr. E. G. Silas for suggestions and help.

*C/o Central Marine Fisheries Research Station,
Mandapam Camp.*

A- INDRASENAN