

ON THE OCCURRENCE OF A GIANT ROCK-COD, *EPINEPHELUS MALABARICUS* (BLOCH AND SCHNEIDER) IN THE ESTUARINE WATERS OF RIVER MANDOVI, GOA*

ABSTRACT

A giant rock-cod, *Epinephelus malabaricus* (Bloch and Schneider) measuring 210 cm in total length was caught in a stake net on 17th August, 1977 in the estuarine waters of river Mandovi, Goa. The fish, a female in the IIIrd stage of maturity, is the first record from estuaries of Goa.

DURING observations of stake net catch opposite Campal in the Mandovi Estuary, Goa, one of the authors came across a giant rock-cod, *Epinephelus malabaricus* (Bloch and Schneider) measuring 210 cm in total length on 17.8.1977. The fish was trapped during high tide at about 12.30 p.m. and was reported by fishermen and was alive for more than two hours after capture. Dhawan and Gopinathan (1968) reported a specimen of rock-cod *E. malabaricus* measuring 230 cm in length caught from the sea off Marmugao Harbour at 18 metre depth. As the present record of this species from Mandovi Estuary is of distributional interest, the morphometric measurements in cm of the fish which weighed 160 kg, were recorded and are given here:

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	(in cm)
Total length	210
Head length	70
Eye diameter	4
Snout to anterior edge of the eye	14
Posterior border of eye to end of head	52
Snout to base of pectoral fin	62
Snout to first dorsal spine	84
Maximum body height at 3rd dorsal spine	54
Girth at end of head	137
Girth at 3rd dorsal spine	164
Girth at anus	141
Girth at caudal peduncle	49

The largest specimen of the species recorded by Day (1878) measured 213 cm. The present one is the largest specimen recorded in the estuaries of Goa. The fish which was a female in the IIIrd stage of maturity had its stomach gorged with a variety of small fishes. This condition of the stomach suggest that the migration of the fish towards estuarine area was mainly for feeding.

Since only a few records of the giant rock-cod are available from the west coast of India, the present report about its occurrence from an estuarine area from where there is no earlier record, should be of interest.

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