



Short Communication

First record of two-stick stingfish, *Inimicus filamentosus* (Cuvier, 1829) from Parangipettai coastal waters, southeast coast of India

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Abstract

Two-stick stingfish *Inimicus filamentosus* were recorded for the first time in trawl catches off Parangipettai coastal waters, southeast coast of India. As this species is the first report from India, the morphometric and meristic characters, distribution pattern and remarks are given in this paper.

Keywords: Two-stick stingfish, *Inimicus filamentosus*, Parangipettai coastal waters

Introduction

During routine trawl fishing at Parangipettai waters (11° 29' N lat.; 79° 46' E long), southeast coast of India, on 10th September 2008, a fish measuring a total length of 119 mm and weight of 35 g was found. It was identified as the two-stick stingfish (also known as stonefish) *Inimicus filamentosus* based on the available literature (FAO, 1984) and FishBase (www.fishbase.org). The entire body was grayish brown in colour. The inner surface of the pectoral fin colouration was diagnostic with 28 - 30 yellowish orange spots and 6 spots on the caudal fin along with 2 yellow bands. An orange coloured spot having 6 mm diameter was also observed on the left side of the body near the anal fin. The stonefishes belong to the family Synanceiidae. There are 31 species belonging to 9 genera (www.fishbase.org). The specimen was characterized by rough head with extremely elevated orbits. A deep oblong pit was present below the eye. Free pectoral fin rays were conspicuous by their absence. The taxonomic position of this species is given below:

Phylum - Chordata
Class - Actinopterygii
Order - Scorpaeniformes

Family - Synanceiidae

Genus - *Inimicus*

Species - *Inimicus filamentosus* (Cuvier, 1829)

Description

Morphometric characters: The morphometric characters of the specimen are given in Table 1.

Table 1. Morphometric measurements of *Inimicus filamentosus* (Cuvier, 1829)

Characters	(mm)
Total length	119
Maximum body depth	28
Head length	29
Pectoral fin length	30
Pelvic fin length	28
Snout length	15
Eye diameter	5
Anal fin length	45
Post-orbital length	10
Length of upper jaw	6

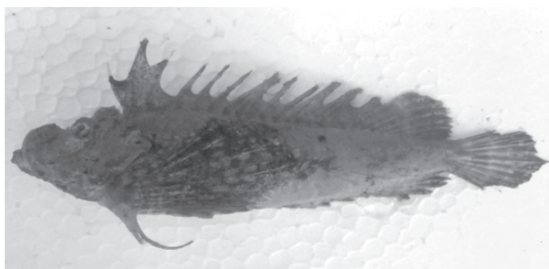


Fig. 1. *Inimicus filamentosus* (Cuvier, 1829)

Meristic characters: The dorsal side of the body had 17 dorsal spines and 8 soft rays. The caudal fin had 12 soft rays. Two spines and 12 soft rays were present in the anal fin. Only one pelvic fin and 9 pelvic soft rays were present. There were 15 soft rays in the pectoral fin.

Distribution

This species is known to occur in western Indian Ocean, Red Sea, East Africa, Madagascar, Maldives, Mauritius and Philippines. It generally inhabits sandy environment, lagoon and rubble bottom of coral reef environment. They camouflage with rocks.

Remarks

The stone fish is the most venomous fish in the world (Halstead, 1970). The dorsal spine releases the venom from two sacs attached to each spine. Venom glands are situated near the base of the dorsal spines. The neurotoxin of these fishes is the most deadly of the fish venoms and is fatal to humans. Its protein based venom causes severe pain with possible shocks, paralysis and tissue death depending on the depth of the penetration.

It is reported that the venom retains its toxicity for several days even after the death of fish (Duhig and Jones, 1928). Williamson *et al.* (1996) found that the stonefish is capable of surviving for more than 24 hours out of water in a moist environment. It is carnivorous in nature and feeds on small fishes and crustaceans.

There are not many studies on this fish in India and elsewhere. The fishing vessels, of late, venture into the deep sea, landing more varieties. This could be the plausible reason for the occurrence of this species in the landings.

Acknowledgements

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