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NOTE

ON THE OCCURRENCE OF THE RARE LONG-NOSED STARGAZER *ICHTHYSCOPUS LEBECK* (BLOCH & SCHNEIDER, 1801) (URANOSCOPIDAE) IN THE COASTAL WATERS OFF VISAKHAPATNAM, INDIA

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ON THE OCCURRENCE OF THE RARE LONG-NOSED STARGAZER *ICHTHYSOPUS LEBECK* (BLOCH & SCHNEIDER, 1801) (URANOSCOPIDAE) IN THE COASTAL WATERS OFF VISAKHAPATNAM, INDIA

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Fishes of the family Uranoscopidae are commonly known as stargazers. This family comprises eight genera, 53 species (Springer & Bauchot 1994; Kishimoto 2001; Nelson 2006; Eschmeyer & Fong 2012; Froese & Pauly 2015). *Ichthyoscopus lebeck* was originally described from Tharangambadi, India by Bloch & Schneider in 1801. It has subsequently been recorded from various parts of India (in the early days often its junior synonym *Ichthyoscopus inermis* or *Anema inerme*), e.g., by Cuvier & Valenciennes (1829), Günther (1860), Day (1865) and Day (1876) and subsequent papers, mostly from southern India, but from Digha Coast of West Bengal Goswami (1992), Laccadives coast (Murty 1969), Manna & Goswami (1985), from Chennai coast Chatterjee et al. (2000); north as Digha Yennawar et al. (2012) and Venkataraman & Sivaperuman (2014) studied marine faunal diversity in India.

Two specimens were caught by using a gill net from Visakhapatnam coastal waters, east coast of India (Image 1) during the month of March 2013. Body

measurements and meristic data were taken in fresh condition. Standard length was measured from the tip of the snout to caudal fin base. In presenting the meristic and body measurements (expressed as percentage of SL or HL). Colour was noted in fresh condition. Morphometric and meristic characters and species identification followed by (Hubbs & Lagler 1947; Gomon & Johnston 1999). The specimens were preserved in 5% formalin and deposited in Marine Living Resource department Museum, Andhra University (Voucher no: AU/ DMLR /124/2014).

Class: Pisces
Sub-class: Teleostei
Order: Perciformes
Family: Uranoscopidae
Species: *Ichthyoscopus lebeck*

Ichthyoscopus lebeck (Bloch & Schneider, 1801) (Images 2–4)

Description based on two specimens measuring 175–192 mm, SL.

Morphometric data of two specimens given in Table
Body moderately, slightly round form; head cuboid in shape, with internal nares. Head region covered with ridges. Mouth moderately large in size; teeth palatine with vomer; eyes are small in size, directed dorsally placed on head. Upper margin of nasal valves fringed.



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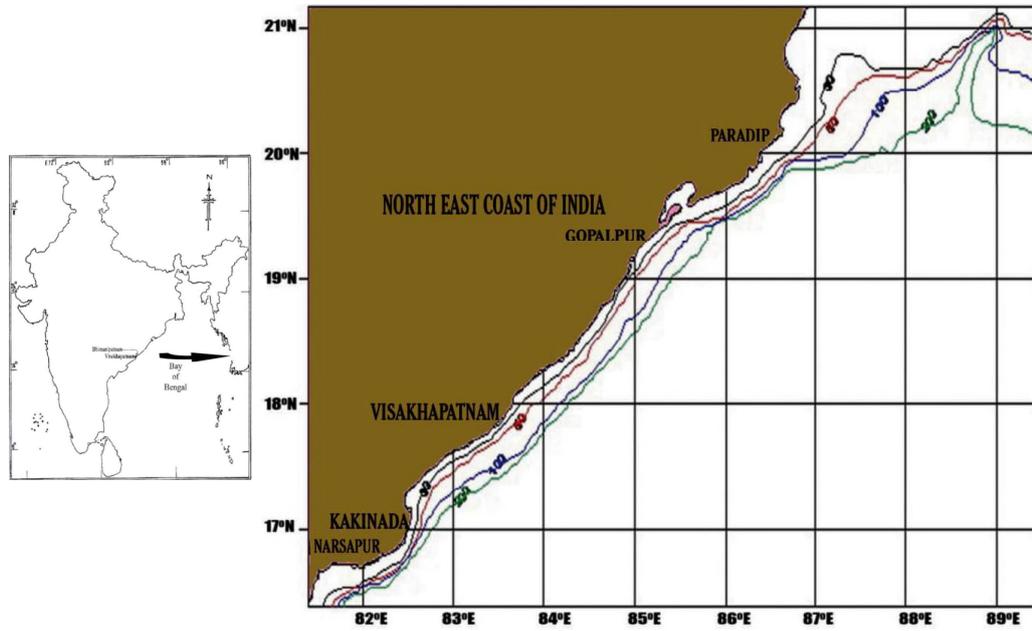


Image 1. Sampling station off Visakhapatnam, India



Image 2. *Ichthyoscopus lebeck* (Bloch & Schneider, 1801), 175mm SL, in Visakhapatnam Fishing Harbour, Andhra Pradesh coast, India.



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Image 3. Ventral side of *Ichthyoscopus lebeck* (Bloch & Schneider, 1801).



Image 4. Dorsal profile of head and inner side of pectoral fin of *Ichthyoscopus lebeck* (Bloch & Schneider, 1801).

Dorsal fin with two spines; pectoral fin rays thick fleshy and knife shaped; upper rays longer than the middle rays; pelvic fin with six rays; caudal fin truncate. A respiratory groove present in between upper part of the cleithrum and pectoral fin which connects the gill opening; posterior edge of opercle fringed and an

elongate angular flap with papillae behind shoulder; mid portion of ventral a dermal flap present on margin of belly region; body with three rows of spots present; lateral line reaches to rear end of caudal fin; body covered with embedded cycloid scales.

Colour: Body canary yellowish with buffy-light brown

Table 1. Meristic counts comparison table of *I. lebeck* from different authors

	Dorsal	Anal fin rays	Pectoral rays	Pelvic fin rays	Caudal fin rays
Yannawar et al. (2012)	II,18	I, 17	19	I, 6	12
Krishna & Rao (2017)	II, 18	I, 18	18	I,5	13

Table 2. Morphometric data of species of *Ichthyoscopus lebeck* represented in the catches of Visakhapatnam, India

Standard length in mm SL	<i>Ichthyoscopus lebeck</i> n= 2	Yannawar et al. (2012)
	175–192	
	Min–Max	
As percentage of standard length		
Total length	120.93–122.05	
Body depth	40.00–40.69	2.3–2.9
Head length	44.40–46.5	2.8–2.83
Pre dorsal distance	45.64–47.67	
Pre pectoral distance	35.46–36.92	
Pre pelvic distance	25.58–26.66	
Pre anal distance	51.28–55.23	
Dorsal base	47.67–49.23	
Pectoral base	18.60–19.48	
Anal base	44.18–44.40	
Ventral base	6.97–8.20	
1st Dorsal ray height	2.32–3.07	
9th dorsal ray height	15.69–15.89	
Pectoral length	36.92–37.06	
Soft Pelvic fin length	23.25–24.61	
1st Anal soft ray height	6.97–9.23	
Last soft anal ray height	9.88–11.28	
Percentage of head length%		
Head depth	78.27–84.72	
Head width	96.97–97.22	
Eye diameter	10.60–13.88	17.4–18.3
Pre orbital distance	12.12–13.88	
Post orbital distance	72.72–73.61	
Inter orbital distance	21.21–25.00	
Maxilla width	13.63–15.27	
Maxilla length	34.72–36.36	
Snout length	12.12–13.00	
Caudal peduncle depth	10.25–10.46	
Inter fossa length	18.18–19.44	
Inter fossa width	9.09–12.50	

marking along the sides; anterior portion of the dorsal fin with canary yellowish; base of the dorsal fin or below half of the dorsal fin with light brownish colour; lower part

of the body with white and pale yellow in colour; inner and outer side of the pectoral and pelvic fins with canary yellow with white margin. Anal and ventral part of the body canary yellowish in colour; caudal fin brownish and pale yellow with dark extremities. Head light brownish; interorbital space with small unconscious white spots; opercle margin with brownish vermiculation; with small brown vermiculated linings present.

Morphometric measurements, meristic counts and colour of the present specimen were similar to the specimen examined by Munro (1955). According to Munro (1955) III–IV dorsal spines; 16–18 dorsal soft rays; anal 16–19 and pectoral rays 18 and according to Froese & Pauly (2015) dorsal II spines, 16–20 soft rays, anal soft rays 17–18 and pelvic fin rays I,5 where as in the present study dorsal fin rays 18; Anal 17; pectoral fin rays 18 present. *I. lebeck* is characterized by its obliquely elongated posterior nostrils (Kishimoto 2001). The species of this genus *Ichthyoscopus* has a more circumtropical in distribution and occur in warm and temperate waters from estuaries to the deep sea, mostly caught in traditional catches wide spread in mostly recorded from southern coasts of India, Singapore and Ceylon.

This is a rare species recorded from Visakhapatnam coastal waters.

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Article

Butterfly diversity in human-modified ecosystems of southern Sikkim, the eastern Himalaya, India

-- Prem Kumar Chettri, Kishor Sharma, Sailendra Dewan & Bhoj Kumar Acharya, 11551–11565

Communications

Contrasting human perceptions of and attitudes towards two threatened small carnivores, *Lycalopex fulvipes* and *Leopardus guigna*, in rural communities adjacent to protected areas in Chile

-- I. Sacristán, A. Cevidanes, F. Acuña, E. Aguilar, S. García, M.J. López, J. Millán & C. Napolitano, Pp. 11566–11573

Sighting trend of the Indian Skimmer (Charadriiformes: Laridae: *Rynchops albicollis* Swainson, 1838) in National Chambal Gharial Sanctuary (1984–2016) reflecting on the feasibility of long-term ecological monitoring

-- L.A.K. Singh & R.K. Sharma, Pp. 11574–11582

Comparative cross-sectional survey on gastrointestinal parasites of captive, semi-captive, and wild Elephants of Sri Lanka

-- Nirupama Abeyssekara, R.P.V. Jayanthe Rajapakse & R.S. Rajakaruna, Pp. 11583–11594

Short Communications

The extinction of Faure's Broom *Adenocarpus faurei* Maire (Leguminosae) in Algeria

-- Mohamed Djamel Miara, Mohammed Ait Hammou & Jah Skipper, Pp. 11595–11598

Conservation assessment of two rare gingers (Zingiberaceae) from Dampa Tiger Reserve, Mizoram, India

-- Pankaj Kumar & Priya Singh, Pp. 11599–11605

New records of bats (Mammalia: Chiroptera) from Assam, northeastern India with a distribution list of bat fauna of the state

-- Ananda Ram Boro, Prasanta Kumar Saikia & Uttam Saikia, Pp. 11606–11612

On the birds of Marivan County, western Iran: an update

-- Fatah Zarei, Seyed Naseh Hosseini, Jalal Pezeshk, Loghman Maleki & Hamid Reza Esmaeili, Pp. 11613–11617

Nesting pattern of birds in Jahangirnagar University Campus, Bangladesh

-- Israt Jahan, Sajeda Begum, Mohammad Mostafa Feeroz, Delip Kumar Das & Ashis Kumar Datta, Pp. 11618–11635

An annotated checklist of the birds of the upper Siang region, Arunachal Pradesh, India

-- Anirban Datta-Roy, Vivek Ramachandran & Karthik Teegalapalli, Pp. 11636–11651

Partners



Report of the early winter migrants and resident birds in an inland wetland near Tundi Camp, Bajana, Gujarat

-- Abhishek Chatterjee, Sudeshna Ghoshal, Soumyajit Chowdhury & Pinakiranjan Chakrabarti, Pp. 11652–11658

The first report of two thread-legged assassin bugs (Hemiptera: Reduviidae: Emesinae) from India

-- Balasaheb V. Sarode, Swapnil S. Boyane & Hemant V. Ghate, Pp. 11659–11664

Water striders, the genus *Cylindrostethus* Mayr (Insecta: Heteroptera: Gerridae) from India with a new record

-- E. Eyarin Jehamalar, Kailash Chandra & G. Srinivasan, Pp. 11665–11671

The invasive aphid *Pterochloroides persicae* (Cholodkovsky, 1899) (Hemiptera: Aphidoidea: Lachninae) recorded on important fruit trees in Kashmir Valley, India

-- Govindasamy Mahendiran, Shahid Ali Akbar & Mudasir Ahmad Dar, Pp. 11672–11678

Notes

***Anemone trullifolia* and *Berberis angulosa* as new records to the flora of the western Himalaya, India**

-- Ishwari Datt Rai, Gajendra Singh & Gopal Singh Rawat, Pp. 11679–11682

Notes on fairy orchids (Magnoliopsida: Asparagales: Orchidaceae: *Oberonia*) of Sri Lanka: revision in regional distribution and documentation on vegetative propagation

-- Menaka Ariyaratne & Deepthi Yakandawala, Pp. 11683–11685

Additional reports of solitary potter wasps (Hymenoptera: Vespidae: Eumeninae) in Bhutan

-- Tshering Nidup, Wim Klein, P. Girish Kumar & Phurpa Dorji, Pp. 11686–11696

On the occurrence of the rare Long-nosed Stargazer *Ichthyoscopus lebeck* (Bloch & Schneider, 1801) (Uranoscopidae) in the coastal waters off Visakhapatnam, India

-- Govinda Rao Velamala & Muddula Krishna Naranji, Pp. 11697–11700

Correction

Corrigendum - Butterfly host plant Monograph, P. 11701

Miscellaneous

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