

NEW RECORD OF THE SMALL EYE STINGRAY, *DASYATIS MICROPS* ANNANDALE, 1908 (MYLIOBATIFORMES: DASYATIDAE), FROM THE NORTHERN ARABIAN SEA

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ABSTRACT

Smalleye stingray (*Dasyatis microps* Annandale, 1908) was originally described from Chittagong, Bangladesh but later on this species was recorded from various other parts of the Indian Ocean including from India, Thailand, Northern Australia, Mozambique and Persian Gulf. In the Arabian Sea, it was reported from Kochi, South of West coast of India. A specimen of *D. microps* was caught by fishermen on 10 May, 2015 from Khori Great Bank which extends the distribution to further North along the coast of Pakistan. The paper described salient features of the specimens collected from Pakistan.

Keyword: Smalleye stingray, *Dasyatis microps*, Myliobatiformes, Dasyatidae, Northern Arabian Sea.

INTRODUCTION

Dasyatis microps Annandale, 1908 was described as *Trygon microps* by Annandale (1908) from Bay of Bengal, off Chittagong coast trawled from a depth of 34 m (17 fathoms). Its holotype (F2410/1) was housed in Zoological Survey of India (Menon and Yazdani, 1968). Later on, Annandale collected three more specimens (Annandale, 1909); one from off the coast of Orissa and two from Ganjam (India). Present study reports occurrence of *D. microps* for the first time from the coast of Pakistan.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This fish was collected by authors from Karachi Fish Harbour which is the largest fish landing center in Pakistan. The information about the location of the collection and other information about their ecology and associate animals were recorded. Specimen was photographed and kept in chilled form (in ice) till morphometric data is recorded.

Measurements were taken with the help of Vernier Caliper to the nearest mm. After measuring, fish was fixed in 10 % formalin and stored in 70 % ethanol. Collected specimens were housed in the museum of the Marine Fisheries Department, Government of Pakistan, Fish Harbour, West Wharf, Karachi, Pakistan.

RESULTS

According to the fishermen, this ray was caught on 10 May, 2015 from Khori Great Bank located at the mouth of the River Indus about 142 nautical miles from City of Karachi at a depth of about 120 m. It was caught with bottom set gillnet.

Description

Disc rhombus (Fig. 1A-B), about 1.31 times as broad as long, with numerous stellate, basal denticles, slightly enlarged around eyes and spiracles. Eyes very small, dark in colour, little prominent (Fig. 1C); spiracles large, without dorsal flaps. Tail (truncated and spine broken) in specimens from other area as long as or little longer than disc; consisting of a broad, flat proximal part. Base and sides of tail with enlarged denticles; ventral with small denticles. Skin soft and delicate, without enlarged tubercles on the disk, bearing numerous minute, spiny denticles; distal part densely clothed with denticles. Mouth large (Fig. 1D); five short finger-like processes on the floor of the upper jaw undulating slightly, lower jaw without undulation; a serrated cutaneous flap hanging down from the roof of the mouth,

Colour: Pinkish brown dorsally, pale ventrally having a tinge of pink. Whitish spots on either side of disc, middorsal and pectoral. Few spots around the orbit, spiracle and base of tail. Middle part of dorsal surface grey; tail grey above, becoming darker distally.



Fig. 1. *Dasyatis microps*: A. Dorsal view; B. Ventral view; C. Eyes and Spiracle; D. Mouth and teeth patches.

Measurements:

Length of disc: 93 cm
Breadth of disc: 131 cm

DISCUSSION

The specimens collected from Pakistan comes in general description of the species provided by Annandale (1908), Nair and Soundararajan (1976) and Raje *et al.*, (2007). Since tail of the photographed species was truncated and spine was removed, therefore, details of the these could not be provided, however, in general morphology, coloration and dentation, provide adequate information to attributed the collected specimen from Pakistan to *Dasyatis microps*.

Kapoor *et al.* (2002) observed this species to be inhabiting coastal waters and river mouths. Khorl Great bank is located right in front of the River Indus at a depth of 120 m. This species was originally described from East coast of India

This species is now known to have wide distribution extending from Northern Australia (Last and Compagno, 1999), India and Mozambique (Pierce *et al.*, 2008). Ishihara *et al.* (1998) recorded *D. microps* from the Ganges River Estuary. *Dasyatis microps* has also been recorded from India (Akhilesh *et al.*, 2014; Bineesh *et al.*, 2014a, 2014b; Nair and Soundararajan, 1976; Raje *et al.*, 2007)), North Malé Atoll, Maldives (Adam, 1998), Gulf of Thailand (Last and Compagno, 1999), Malaysia (Mohsin and Ambak, 1996), Indonesia (White *et al.*, 2006; White and Dharmadi, 2007) and the Arafura Sea off Northern Australia (Last and Compagno, 1999). Although Fowler (1941) recorded *D. microps* from the Philippines and adjacent areas, Compagno *et al.* (2005) did not report this species as occurring in the Philippines.

From the Arabian Sea this species is reported from Kochi, India by Bineesh *et al.* (2014b) and the Maldives by Adam *et al.* (1998) and from Persian Gulf reported by Moore (2010) but no previous record of its occurrence was available from Northern and Northeastern and Western Arabian Sea. The present paper reports its occurrence from Pakistan coast, therefore, filling in the gap in continuous distribution of this species in the Arabian Sea.

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