

FIRST RECORD OF OCCURRENCE OF BIGHEAD GOBY (EGO ZEBRA) FROM PAKISTAN

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ABSTRACT

Ego zebra Randall, 1994 is reported for the first time from Churna Island, Pakistan coast. This species is reported to be endemic to the Northern Indian Ocean, as it is reported from Oman and now Pakistan.

Keywords: *Ego Zebra*, Pakistan, Arabian Sea. Oman, bighead goby, Gobiidae.

INTRODUCTION

Gobies from Pakistan has been studied Hoda (1980, 1981, 1983a, 1983b, 1984, 1985a, 1985b, 1986, 1987a, 1987b, 1988, 1991a, 1991b), Hoda and Akhtar (1985) and Hoda and Goren (1990). According to available information, a total of 57 species are reported from Pakistan making it the most diversified group of fishes found in Pakistan. In October 2005, a specimen of small pelagic gobiid fish collected which is identified as *Ego zebra* Randall (1994).

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Sample of fish was provided by a fishermen at Goth Mubbarak which he has collected from Churna Island on 6th October, 2015. The fish was photographed using digital camera and is now housed in the Museum of the Marine Fisheries Department.

RESULTS

One specimen of fish belonging to Family Gobiidae identified as *Ego Zebra* Randall 1994 is recorded for the first time from Pakistan.

Family GOBIIDAE Cuvier 1816
Genus *Ego* Randall, 1994
Ego Zebra Randall, 1994
(Fig. 1)

Material examined:

One specimen collected from Churna Island, of Karachi on October 6, 2005 caught by a cast net (GOB-131/2005/MFD; 4.1 cm TL).



Fig. 1. *Ego zebra* collected from Churna island (4.1 cm TL).

Description:

Morphological characters of bighead goby, as it is commonly known, are almost similar to the specimens described by Randall (1994; 1995) from Oman. The fish is translucent with a black spot behind upper end of gill opening; followed by six black bars; the first and the last (at caudal fin base) vertical, the second to fifth oblique.

DISCUSSION

Ego zebra is a monotypic species previously known from Cave in reef, Rahah Bay, southern Oman. Present paper extends its distribution to further north and northeast to Pakistan coast. This specimen was collected from Churna Island using cast net by a fishermen who was targeting baitfish for its longline operation. This small fish was reported to form small groups that move in unison and retreat to nearby rocky outcrop. Fishermen of the area are familiar with this fish and call it "jhiri", a name which is primarily used for flying fish but because of its retreat nature and jerky move, they also referred to it as comparable to flying fish.

This species seems to be endemic to the Northern Arabian Sea, as it is reported only from Rahah Bay, southern Oman by Randall (1994, 1995) and now from Pakistan. There is a need for search for this species in other parts of Arabian Sea and Indo-Pacific areas.

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