

# Marine Fisheries Information Service



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## A note on the mottled fusilier *Dipterygonotus balteatus* (Valenciennes, 1830) landed along Tamil Nadu coast

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Unusual landing of the mottled fusilier *Dipterygonotus balteatus* was observed along the northern coast of Tamil Nadu during July and September 2006. Mottled fusiliers belong to the percoid family Caesionidae. While the juveniles are known to school together with other caesionids on coral reefs, the adults are usually distributed in near shore pelagic waters. *D. balteatus* occurs in Indo-Pacific waters, from East Africa, off Lakshadweep, Sri Lanka, Indonesia, to Philippines, Indo-China and northern Australia.

Locally called as "Árna Val" (in Tamil), the fish was landed in large quantities at Cuddalore and Chennai by trawl boats operating at depths of 40-50 m along the coast. The area of operation extended from Krishnapattinam in Andhra Pradesh, up to Mahabalipuram in north Tamil Nadu. Trawl boats

from Cuddalore operated between Mahabalipuram and Parangipettai in south Tamil Nadu. About 1 tonne



*Dipterygonotus balteatus* landed by trawl nets at Cuddalore

of this fish was recorded at Cuddalore on 29.07.2006, and about 500 kg was recorded at Chennai on 07.09.2006. Although this fish is known to be distributed along the coast, such landings have not been reported earlier. It is usually found to occur in stray numbers with large catches of sardines or

anchovies. *D. balteatus* has also often been recorded in the stomach contents of carnivorous fishes like ribbonfishes and lizardfishes.

It is a small fish, growing to a maximum size of 14 cm. The size range recorded in the landings was 5 - 11 cm TL.