

30. ON THE OCCURRENCE OF SAURIDA ISARANKURAI SHINDO AND YAMADA
1972 FROM THE WEST COAST OF INDIA
(With a text-figure)

A total of eight species of the genus *Saurida* Val. 1849, viz., *Saurida tumbil* (Bloch, 1795), *Saurida gracilis* Quoy and Gaimard, 1824; *Saurida undosquamis* (Richardson, 1848), *Saurida longimanus* Norman, 1939; *Saurida micropectoralis* Shindo and Yamada 1972, *Saurida wanieso* Shindo and Yamada, 1972, *Saurida isarankurai* Shindo and Yamada, 1972 and *Saurida pseudotumbil* Dutt and Vidya Sagar, 1981 are known to occur in the seas around India (Day 1877, Munro 1955, Norman 1935, Rao 1977, Dutt and Vidya Sagar 1981, Nanda and Ramamoorthi 1982, Fischer and Whitehead 1974, Waples 1983). Dutt and Vidya Sagar (1981) reported *S. isarankurai* from India on the basis of material from Visakhapatnam and Kakinada, but did not provide any description. Later Nanda and Ramamoorthi (1982) reported this species again as a new record from India on the basis of one specimen from Porto Novo. While studying the taxonomy and biology of lizardfishes from the west coast of India, we collected several specimens of *S. isarankurai*. As there is no earlier report from the western Indian Ocean and also due to the fact that there is no detailed description of the species based on adequate samples, it was felt

necessary to provide information to understand the intraspecific variations if any, and also for easier identification of the species.

Specimens were collected from the catches of trawlers operating at a depth of 20-25 m off Mangalore, Malpe, Bhatkal and Karwar on the west coast of India. Morphometric and meristic data were recorded following Hubbs and Lagler (1958). Colour was noted from fresh specimens. Standard length (SL) was measured from tip of snout to the end of vertebral column. A total of 24 morphometric characters and 8 meristic characters were recorded. The different body proportions were expressed in percentage of SL or head length along with their range and mean to facilitate better comparison.

Material examined: 31 males of length range 55-101 mm (SL) and 22 females of 51-116 mm.

Description: B. 14-15 (14); D. 11-13 (12); A. 10-12 (11); P1. 12-13 (13); P2. 9; L1. 45-49 (47); L tr. 4-5/6; Vertebrae 45-47 (45.5).

As percentage of standard length: Head length 22.4-25.5 (23.8); snout length 4.5-6.0 (5.2); eye diameter 4.1-5.8 (4.9); interorbital distance 3.3-5.2

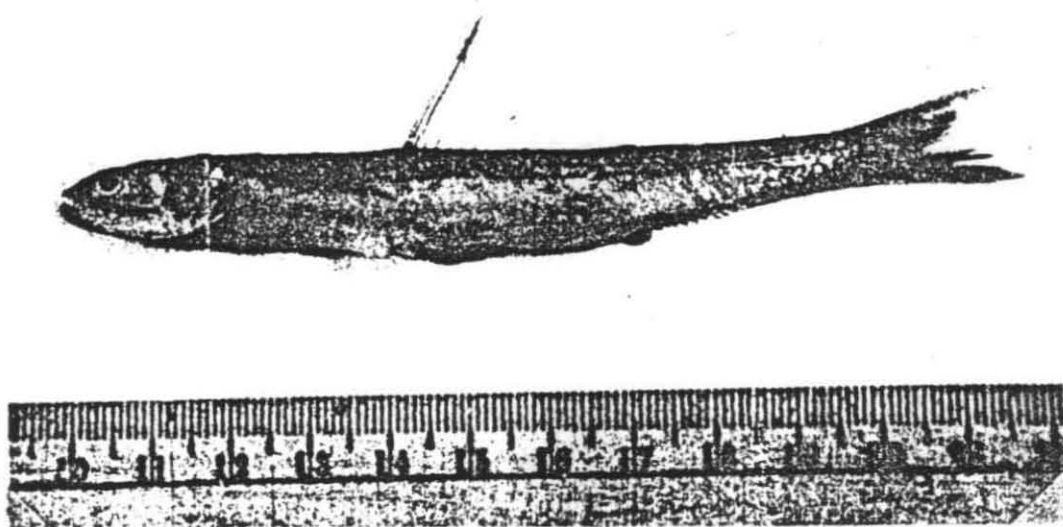


Fig. 1. *Saurida isarankurai* Shindo and Yamada 1972

(4.1); post-orbital length 12.8-14.9 (13.8); premaxillary length 15.8-17.4 (15.7). Distance from snout tip to origin of dorsal fin 41.5-48.6 (44.5); anal fin 71.8-79.7 (74.9); adipose fin 77.6-85.5 (82.0); pectoral fin 22.2-28.1 (25.7); pelvic fin 35.4-42.0 (39.2). Greatest body depth 10.5-13.3 (11.9); depth at pelvic fin origin 8.8-15.0 (11.2); depth at anal fin origin 8.5-11.7 (10.1); depth at caudal peduncle 5.8-7.4 (6.6). Height of dorsal fin 20.5-25.6 (22.9); dorsal base 11.8-14.4 (13.3); pectoral length 15.8-20.8 (18.3); pelvic length 15.0-19.1 (16.8); anal height 11.6-15.2 (13.0); anal base 8.4-13.3 (10.4); length of upper caudal lobe 17.9-23.6 (20.6). Distance from dorsal fin origin to adipose fin origin 29.6-40.6 (37.5); pelvic fin origin to anal fin origin 22.2-38.0 (36.0).

As percentage of head length: Snout 20.0-25.5 (22.0); eye diameter 17.0-23.8 (20.7); interorbital distance 13.5-21.8 (17.3); post-orbital length 53.1-60.6 (56.6); premaxillary length 60.6-72.2 (66.2); pectoral length 65.4-87.3 (77.1); pelvic fin length 63.6-80.0 (71.1).

Body elongate and cylindrical, head depressed. Lower jaw longer than upper jaw and visible from above when mouth is closed. Caniniform teeth in several rows in both jaws; palatine teeth caniniform in two narrow bands on each side, the inner band shorter than the outer. Second dorsal ray longest and equals head length. Pectoral tip extending well beyond origin of pelvic. Adipose dorsal fin above posterior portion of anal. Lower caudal lobe longer than upper lobe.

Colour: Dorsal side and upper flanks brownish mottled with grey, lower flanks and belly silvery white. A row of 8-10 indistinct dark spots along sides. Dorsal fin brownish yellow with scattered black pigments; its anterior upper corner dark. Upper part of pectoral fin dark, lower part white. Upper lobe of caudal yellowish with black pigment spots, lower lobe blackish, pelvic and anal fins without markings.

Distribution: West Central Pacific, coasts of India through Gulf of Thailand.

S. isarankurai forms a minor fishery during November to May along the Karnataka coast. It constitutes one of the components of the trawler catches operated at a depth of 20-50 m, comprising Squilla, crabs, juvenile nemipterids, *Upeneus* spp., *Platycephalus* spp. etc. Their catch per boat varied from 2 to 40 kg during November-May at Mangalore, Malpe, Bhatkal and Karwar.

S. isarankurai can be easily distinguished from other known Indian *Saurida* spp. by longer lower jaw visible from above when mouth is closed, longer pectoral fin extending beyond pelvic origin and reaching almost base of dorsal fin origin and longer lower lobe of caudal than upper lobe.

The present description of *S. isarankurai* from the west coast of India fully agrees with the same species from Gulf of Thailand originally described by Shindo and Yamada (1972) except the difference in the length of pectoral fin. In the present observation the pectoral length is 18.3% of SL instead of 19.1-23.8% as recorded by Shindo and Yamada. The pectoral fin length of 18.2% of SL as given by Nanda and Ramamoorthi (1982) for Porto Novo specimen is identical with the present observation. This indicates that specimens of *S. isarankurai* from Indian waters have slightly shorter pectoral fin than those from the Gulf of Thailand.

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