

Occurrence of starry blowfish, *Arothron stellatus* from Kasimedu Fish Landing Centre, Chennai, Tamil Nadu

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The blowfish, locally called as “Pethai” are generally believed to be poisonous. Certain internal organs and sometimes their skin are highly toxic to most animals when eaten, nevertheless the meat of some species is considered a delicacy in Japan (as *fugu*) and Korea (as *bok*), when prepared by chefs who know what is safe to eat and in what quantity. Puffer fish is eaten safely worldwide simply by killing and gutting the fish while it is fresh. The starry puffer

fish is white with numerous small black spots that become relatively smaller and more numerous as the fish grows.

The blowfish is placed under order Tetraodontiformes, class: Actinopterygii and family Tetraodontidae

Distribution

Family Tetraodontidae contains at least 121 species of puffers in 20 genera. They are most

Table 1. Morphometric characteristics of puffer fish *Arothron stellatus*

Parameters	Measurements (mm)	Parameters	Measurements (mm)
Total length	550	Anal fin width	40
Standard length	465	Snout to anus	330
Snout to first dorsal fin length	320	Snout to spiracle length	55
Dorsal fin height	88	Snout to eye length	90
Dorsal fin width	45	Eye diameter	20
Snout to first pectoral fin length	160	Body width at head	120
Pectoral fin height	50	Body width at pectoral fin	130
Pectoral fin width	50	Body width at middle	150
Pectoral fin curve	80	Mouth length	60
Pectoral fin curve	105	Lower teeth height	29
Snout to first anal fin length	350	Upper teeth height	29
Anal fin height	68	Total body weight (kg)	4.3
Anal fin curve	75		

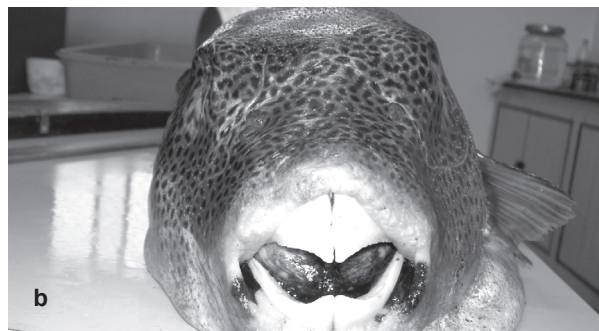


Fig. 1 a and b. Starry blow fish *Arothron stellatus* from Kasimedu Fish Landing Centre, Chennai

diverse in the tropics and relatively uncommon in the temperate zone and completely absent from cold waters. The starry pufferfish occurs in tropical marine waters of the Indo-Pacific. On 07.07.2010 these fishes were caught by gillnetters from Kasimedu Fish Landing Centre, Chennai (Fig.1 a and b).

Food and feeding habits

The puffer fishes are omnivorous though a large part of their diet is meat food. They are reported to eat various invertebrates, crustaceans, molluscs and seaweeds. The gut contents showed more of molluscs and crab shells in broken form and the total gut content weighed on an average about 400 g (Fig. 2).



Fig. 2. Gut content of *A. stellatus* showing more of broken molluscs and crab shells