

First record of Silver moony, *Monodactylus argenteus* (Linnaeus, 1758) from Visakhapatnam, Andhrapradesh

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The family Monodactylidae includes six fish species that are commonly called Moon fishes. Out

of the six species only two have been reported by Indian researchers so far. The genus *Monodactylus*

has four species viz. *Monodactylus argenteus*, *M. falciformis*, *M. kottelati* and *M. sebae*. *M. argenteus* commonly known as silver moony is distributed in the Indo-West Pacific, Red Sea and East Africa to Samoa, north to the Yaeyamas, south to New Caledonia and Australia. This species usually occurs in bays, mangrove estuaries, tidal creeks, and lower reaches of freshwater streams and occasionally in silty coastal reefs. It feeds on plankton and detritus. It is commonly seen in schools, small juveniles either solitary or in small aggregations.



Fig. 1. *M. argenteus*, 125 mm (Total length)

A specimen of *Monodactylus argenteus* (Fig. 1) was collected from the commercial trawler at Visakhapatnam fishing harbour on 6th August 2013. After detailed morphological examination, the specimen was fixed with 5% formalin and deposited at the marine fish museum of VRC of CMFRI, Visakhapatnam. The morphometric measurements were taken to the nearest mm and the specimen identified as *M. argenteus* is the first report on its occurrence along Visakhapatnam, east coast of India

The species is characterized by oval, deep, strongly compressed body; eye moderately large,

its diameter longer than snout length; mouth small and oblique; dorsal fin with VIII spines and 28 soft rays; anterior soft dorsal-fin rays elongated, situated over mid-length of body. Anal fin with III spines and 28 soft rays; anterior soft anal-fin rays elongated, situated below mid-length of body, longer than elongated soft dorsal-fin rays; posterior edge of dorsal and anal fins distinctly concave. Caudal fin slightly emarginate. Pelvic fins rudimentary. Body, head, and unpaired fins covered by small, deciduous scales. Silver colored body with two vertical black bands over head, one passes through eye and other in front of pectoral-fin base; tip of dorsal and anal fins black; anterior edge of anal fin with broad black margin (Table 1).

Meristic characters: D VIII+28, A III+28, P 15, C 16, Gr 8+19

Table 1. Morphometric measurements of *Monodactylus argenteus*

Characters	Measurements (mm)
Total length	125
Standard length	94
Snout length	06
Body depth	84
Post-orbital length	16
Length of dorsal fin base	57
Dorsal fin soft ray length	39
Length of pectoral fin	21
Length of anal fin soft ray	43
Head length	34
Eye diameter	11
Caudal peduncle length	08
Peduncle height	14
Caudal fin height	37
Inter orbital width	13
Pre-dorsal length	40
Pre-anal length	40
Pre-orbital length	07
Pre-pectoral length	26
Width of maxilla	3.5
Maxilla length	09