

## On the occurrence of a serranid fish, *Sacura boulengeri* (Heemstra, 1973) at Veraval, Gujarat

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On 28<sup>th</sup> October, 2013, a single specimen of *Sacura boulengeri* (locally known as 'Vekhli') belonging to the family Serranidae was collected from Veraval landing centre. The family serranidae, comprises of three subfamily Serraninae, Epinephelinae and Anthiinae. Fishes belonging to Anthiinae are beautifully colored that inhabit coral and deep-reef habitats in tropical and warm temperate seas, and some of these species are taxonomically confusing. Many Anthiinae fishes are very few in collection because of their rarity. The genus *Sacura* is comprised of 4 species: *Sacura boulengeri* (Heemstra, 1973), *S. speciosa*, *S. parva* (Heemstra and Randall, 1979) and *S. margaritacea* (Hilgendorf, 1879). *Sacura boulengeri* belongs to Anthiinae is small fish having a maximum recorded size 19.0 cm (Randall, J. E., 1995). It is not a commercially important species and landed as by-catch.

The information on the catch area and the depth of operation of the vessel was collected from



Fig.1 Specimen of *Sacura boulengeri* (male) from Gujarat

the fishermen. It was caught by a multiday trawler (45 ft) from a depth of 80-100 m. The fish was 162 mm in length weighing 40 g. Morphometric and meristic counts have been made as per the method prescribed by Hubbs and Lagler (1949). The GPS location (22° 17' 59" N, 68° 07' 92" E) collected from the fishermen confirms that the species has caught from the waters off Dwarka. The morphological and meristic characters of the current specimen was also compared with the earlier records from Indian water and given in table 2. The specimen was photographed, and deposited to the museum of Veraval regional centre of CMFRI.

### Description

The specimen was found to be male having a very colorful body with dark pink color bands horizontally. Body is oval and moderately compressed. Mouth is terminal. Third dorsal spine and 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> ray is very long. Caudal fin is lunate shaped. Morphometric measurement ratios are: Head length 39.5% of SL, Body depth 38.9% of SL, Third dorsal spine 44.8% of SL, Pectoral fin length 29.3% of SL, Pelvic fin 25.8% of SL, Anal fin 30.6% of SL, Caudal peduncle depth 13.4% of SL, Eye diameter 26.6% of HL, Snout 20% of HL and Inter orbital space 23.7% of HL.

The species was found to be caught with other demersal fishes

The fish is known to be distributed in the western Indian Ocean. Earlier, it has been recorded from off the coasts of Muscat, Oman; Sindh, Pakistan and western India, Cochin (CMFRI, 2008) and Mumbai. Till now it has not been reported from Gujarat coast hence this constitutes the first record of the species from the coast.

**Table 1. The comparative morphometric data of *S. bouleengeri* (SL = standard length, HL = head length)**

Character	Muscat (1979)	Sindh (2004)	Neendakara (2005)	Mangalore (2006)	Mumbai (2005)	Cochin (2008)	Gujarat (2013)
Greatest body depth (% SL)	41- 43	41.7	39.1	41.8	41.9	39.4	38.9
Head length (% SL)	42- 43	39.2	38.1	44.0	35	38.8	39.5
Pectoral fin length (% SL)	29-32	29.2	29.7	29.2	33	29.1	29.3
Pelvic fin length (% SL)	25-29	28.3	30.2	29.2	24.1	27.6	25.8
Caudal peduncle length (% SL)	20-22	20.8	21	20.3	15.9	18.8	16.5
Caudal peduncle depth (% SL)	12 - 14	12.5	14.6	12.3	13.1	13.1	13.4
First dorsal spine length (% SL)	6.4-7.3	5.8	6.5	6	6.1	6.3	4.8
Second dorsal spine length (% SL)	9.7-11	7.5	9.2	9.9	8.9	17.1	6.4
Third dorsal spine length (% SL)	52-66	55	40.9	50.8	53	45.1	44.8
Fourth dorsal spine length (% SL)	13-15	14.2	13	13.6	13.2	13.1	12.8
Third dorsal soft ray length (% SL)	50-52	47.5	48.4	52.5	49.1	39	39.2
Anal fin length (% SL)	33-36	32.5	31	31.8	30.5	32	30.6
First anal spine length (% SL)	7.6-8	7.5	7	7.3	7.4	6.6	6.4
Second anal spine length (% SL)	14-17	15	12.6	14.6	14.1	12.6	12.8
Second anal soft ray length (% SL)	26-29	25	27.9	27.8	24.3	26.3	26
Pelvic fin spine length (% SL)	15-18	15	14	15.2	15.7	14.3	14.4
Snout length (% HL)	20-21	21.3	21	20.4	20.3	19.1	20
Orbit length (% HL)	26-28	27.7	27.5	27.6	22.3	23.5	26.6
Inter orbital width (% HL)	20-22	23.4	22	22	22	23.5	23.7
Post orbital distance (% HL)	53-56	53.5	53	57.2	63.1	55.9	55.8
Upper jaw length	43-44	42.6	42	42.3	45.3	42.6	42
Maxilla depth (% SL)	14-16	17.3	15.4	16.3	16.9	-	16
Gill rakers (Upper)	14-16	N.S.*	12	12	12	14	18
Gill rakers (Lower)	30-33	N.S.*	27	27	27	29-30	28