

Note

First record of glass eye, *Heteropriacanthus cruentatus* (Lacepede, 1801) (*Cookeolus boops* Schneider, 1801) from Indian waters

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ABSTRACT

The first record of occurrence in India of a relatively unfamiliar species of marine fish belonging to the family Priacanthidae is presented here. A single specimen obtained from trawl catch at Mangalore was identified as the glass eye, *Heteropriacanthus cruentatus* (Lacepede, 1801). The name *Cookeolus boops* (Schneider, 1801) is now used as the junior synonym. The identifying morphometric and meristic characters, location and depth of capture of the species are given.

Marine fishes of the family Priacanthidae are moderately sized with relatively compressed body and very large eyes. *Priacanthus hamrur* is the common species exploited along the southwest coast of India. The exploitation and migration of this species from Mangalore has been studied by Zacharia *et al.* (1991). This note presents the data on the first record of a relatively uncommon species of Priacanthid caught by a multi-day trawler, south off Mangalore at 120 m depth (Fig.1).

The single specimen caught on 23.1.1999 had very big eyes with a brilliant reflective layer, big and superior mouth (strongly oblique) and very rough scales with integral species bright red in colour. The important characters of the specimen are presented in Table 1. These characters especially the presence of upper denticles of the lachrymal bones enlarged to spinous proportions protruding over maxilla helped to identify the specimen as *Cookeolus boops*. (Fischer and Bianchi, 1984).

TABLE 1. Distinguishing characters of *H. cruentatus*

Fin counts	DX, 13; A III, 13; LL 59; GR 5+17
Characters	1. Spinous dorsal fin with longest spine posteriorly.
	2. Upper denticles of the lachrymal bones enlarged to spinous proportions protruding over maxilla.
	3. Soft rays of dorsal and anal fin are filamentous and long.
	4. Ventral or pelvic fins long, dark coloured.
	5. Caudal rounded.



Fig.1. Species of priacanthid identified as *Heteropriacanthus cruentatus* (Lacepede, 1801)

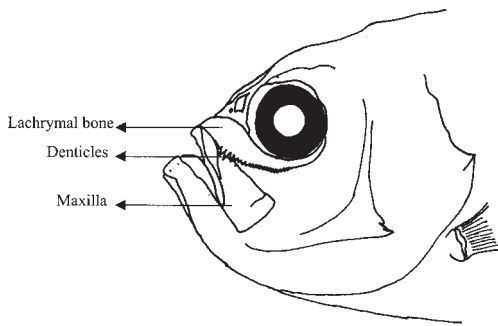


Fig.2. Mouth region of *Heteropriacanthus cruentatus* (Lacepede, 1801) showing the denticles on the lachrymal bone enlarged to spinous proportions protruding over the maxilla.

According to the information available in Fishbase 98, the present valid name of this species is *Heteropriacanthus cruentatus* (Lacepede, 1801) and *Cookeolus boops* (Schneider, 1801) is now used as the junior synonym.

Heteropriacanthus cruentatus is epibenthic but eggs, larvae and early juvenile stages are pelagic (Fishbase, 1998). It is distributed in tropical and subtropical Atlantic, Indian and Pacific Oceans and is generally associated with rocky formations or coral reefs. Few species are often trawled in more open areas. The fish is usually carnivorous and nocturnal. Typically less than 30 cm in TL with

largest specimen recorded more than 50 cm (Froese and Pauly, 1998). This species was earlier reported from Yemen (Al Salaff and Esseen, 1999) and Maldives (Randall and Anderson, 1993) from the Indian Ocean but not from India. Other species of this family (Priacanthidae) has got wide distribution throughout the Indo-Pacific region.

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