

FIRST RECORD OF *AMBASSIS INTERRUPTA* BLEEKER (PISCES : CHANDIDAE)
FROM SEAS OF INDIA

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ABSTRACT

Ambassis interrupta Bleeker were collected from Kovelong near Madras and recorded for the first time from this area.

During an intensive faunistic survey, three specimens of *Ambassis interrupta* Bleeker were collected on 7.3.75 from the brackish water creek near Kovelong about 37 Km. south of Madras. The specimens were obtained by operating cast net. Other dominant species in the catch were *Nematolosa nasus* (Bl.) and *Tilapia mossambica* (Peters).

Day (1889) had given its habitat as 'Sea at the Andamans and Batavia'. Herre (1941) has indicated 'Andamans to the Phillippines and New Caledonia' as its habitat. Weber and Beaufort (1929) have not mentioned India in the distribution of this species. This is the first record of *Ambassis interrupta* from the main coast of India. Day (1889) described 11 species, *A. nama*, *A. ranga*, *A. baculis*, *A. thomassi*, *A. nalua*, *A. interrupta*, *A. dayi*, *A. commersoni*, *A. myops*, *A. gymnocephalus* and *A. urotaenia* from Indian waters, of which *A. nama*, *A. ranga*, *A. baculis* and *A. thomassi* are fresh water species and referable to genus *Chanda*. A brief description of *A. interrupta* along with a key to the species of *Ambassis* is presented in this paper.

***Ambassis interrupta* Bleeker**

Ambassis interrupta Bleeker, 1852, *Nat. Tijdsch. Ned. Indic*, 3, : 696.

Ambassis interrupta, Day, 1889, *Fauna Brit. India, Fish.*, 1 : 487.

Ambassis interrupta, Weber and Beaufort, 1929, *The fishes of the Indo-Australian Archipelago*, 5 : i-xiv, 1-459, 98 figs.

Material : ZSI, SRS, Madras : 3 exs., 40 mm to 60 mm. S. L., Creek near Kovelong, 7.3.75, T Venkateswarlu coll.

Description : D. 7/1/9-19. P. 13. A. 3/9-11. G. 18. L. I. 28 to 30. Length of head $3\frac{1}{2}$, height of body $2\frac{1}{2}$ in total length. Eye diameter $2\frac{1}{2}$ in length of head. Mouth much oblique. Small pointed teeth in a few rows in jaws, in a single row on vomer and palatines. Teeth on tongue. Preorbital with both its upper and lower edges serrated. Anterior edge of orbit serrated, and two spines at its posterior superior angle. Vertical margin of pre-opercle entire, the double edge of its horizontal limb serrated. Supraorbital ridge with a single spine posteriorly. Interoperculum with 4-13 serrations. 2 rows of

scales on cheek. Dorsal separated by 12-15 scales from occiput. Second dorsal spine stronger and longer than the others. Pectorals longer than ventrals. Caudal deeply forked. Lateral line incomplete below 8th dorsal spine, continued again. Colour silvery with a narrow lateral band, the membrane between second dorsal spine and third black, a dark longitudinal band along either caudal lobe.

Distribution : Eastern Indian Ocean (Madras)

KEY TO THE SPECIES OF *AMBASSIS*

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|--|-------------------------|---|
| 1. Supraorbital ridge dentate at least posteriorly ... | ... | 2 |
| Supraorbital ridge smooth, with a single backwardly-directed spine posteriorly ... | ... | 3 |
| 2. Hind edge of preoperculum denticulate ... | <i>A. dussumieri</i> | |
| Hind edge of preoperculum smooth ... | <i>A. gymnocephalus</i> | |
| 3. Lateral line continuous. ... | ... | 4 |
| Lateral line interrupted. ... | ... | 7 |
| 4. Inter-opercle serrated. ... | ... | 5 |
| Inter-opercle not serrated. ... | ... | 6 |
| 5. L. I. 26—28. ... | <i>A. nalua</i> | |
| L. I. 30. ... | <i>A. dayi</i> | |

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|---|----------------------|
| 6. 13—16 predorsal scales. ... | <i>A. miops</i> |
| 17—22 predorsal scales. ... | <i>A. commersoni</i> |
| 7. 8—9 predorsal scales. ... | ... 8 |
| 11—16 predorsal scales. ... | <i>A. interrupta</i> |
| 8. Teeth on tongue. Each caudal lobe with a longitudinal dark band. ... | <i>A. urotaenia</i> |
| No teeth on tongue. Tip of spinous part of dorsal deep black. ... | <i>A. kopsi</i> |

The specimens are deposited in the Southern Regional Station, Zoological Survey of India, Madras.

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