

SHORT COMMUNICATION

Bull. zool. Surv. India, 3 (3) : 275-276, 1981

ON A RECORD OF THE RARE FISH *OXUDERCES DENTATUS* (PISCES : GOBIIDAE) FROM JAMBU ISLAND, WEST BENGAL

Oxuderces dentatus Eydoux & Souleyet, 1842 is known so far from Madras (India), Indonesia (Pulu Weh and Java), Thailand (Paknam and off mouth of Meklong), Macao and China (Foochow, Feng-hsien, Feng-hsien and Amoy) (Springer, 1978). It is worth mentioning here that *O. dentatus* has all along been misidentified with *Apocryptes cantor*^{*} Day, 1871 (type species of *Apocryptichthys* Day, 1876). As a result, the above records of *O. dentatus* have been published either as that of *A. cantor* or as other species of *Apocryptichthys*.

Two well preserved specimens of *Oxuderces dentatus* were obtained during a recent collection of gobiid fishes from the Gangetic delta (West Bengal). Subsequent to Day (1876), this rare fish has not been recorded so far from Indian waters. The present record of *O. dentatus* from West Bengal, therefore, forms the second report of this species from India and also extends its range of distribution further north-eastwards to West Bengal.

A brief description of *O. dentatus* is given below.

***Oxuderces dentatus* Eydoux & Souleyet, 1842**

Oxuderces dentatus Eydoux & Souleyet, 1842, *Zoologie*, 1 (2) : 182 ; pl. 8, fig. 2 [Orig. descr. ; Macao ; holotype in Museum National d'Histoire Naturelle, Paris].

Material : Two specimens, 60-70 mm standard length ; from a shallow depression at the muddy bank of Cheena river at Jambu Island in the Gangetic delta, West Bengal (Lat. 21° 34' N., Long. 88° 16' E.) ; Sept. 7, 1974 ; coll. T. K. Chatterjee ; ZSI Regd. No. 7391/2.

Description : Dorsal VI, 27 ; Pelvic I, 5 ; Anal I, 25 ; Pectoral 22 ; Caudal 16. Body elongated, somewhat compressed ; head somewhat depressed, lower surface flat. Depth of body 15.1-16.7, length of head 25.0—27.4 ; both in percentage of standard length. Eye diameter 7.3—7.5 per cent head length. Mouth wide, nearly horizontal ; posterior end of maxillary reaching far beyond eye.

Gill opening restricted, extending dorsally from the point somewhat dorsal to ventral fin origin to opposite level of about sixth to eighth from ventralmost pectoral fin-ray.

^{*}*Apocryptes cantor* is placed under genus *Boleophthalmus* Valenciennes, 1837 (Springer, 1978).

Apocryptichthys cantor [Not Day, 1871] Day, 1876, *Fish. India*, (2) : 302 [in part ; Madras].

Apocryptichthys sericus Herre, 1927, *Monogr. Bur. Sci. Manila*, (23) : 264 ; pl. 21, fig. 1 [Amoy ; type not extant].

Apocryptichthys livingstoni Fowler, 1935, *Proc. Acad. nat. Sci. Philad.*, 87 : figs. 131-132 [Paknam, Siam ; holotype in Academy of natural Sciences, Philadelphia].

Very small scale pouches visible on the posterior half of body, becoming larger posteriorly; a few cycloid scales on caudal peduncle. No scale or scale pouch visible on head.

Teeth in jaws uniserial. All teeth with obtuse tips; front teeth in upper jaw strong canines; teeth in lower jaw more or less laterally projected, longer than small teeth of upper jaw.

Colour in alcohol: Light violet. Sides of head with brownish spots. Caudal fin deep brown, other fins yellow. A brownish blotch at the posterior extremity of dorsal fin.

Remarks: In original description, *Oxuderces dentatus* was described as lacking pelvic fins and having six spines in the anal fin. Springer (1978) after examining the holotype of *O. dentatus*, states that it is a malformed specimen, and that normally the pelvic fins are present. The presence of six anal spines is an error. These are the major sources of the taxonomic confusion surrounding *O. dentatus*. Moreover, one of the specimens of *A. cantoris* on which Day (1876) based his

genus *Apocryptichthys*, was determined by Springer (1978) as *Oxuderces dentatus*. As a result, *O. dentatus* has often been confused with *Apocryptes cantoris*.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am greatly indebted to Dr. V. G. Springer, of National Museum of Natural History, Washington, for kindly confirming the specific identity of the fish. I am most grateful to the Director, Zoological Survey of India, Calcutta, for facilities and to Drs. A. G. K. Menon and K. C. Jayaram, Deputy Directors for guidance and kindly going through the manuscript.

REFERENCES

- DAY, F. 1876. *The fishes of India*, (2) : 169-368; pls. xli-lxxi.
- SPRINGER, V. G. 1978. Synonymization of the family Oxudercidae, with comments on the identity of *Apocryptes cantoris* Day (Pisces : Gobiidae). *Smithsonian Contributions to Zoology*, No. 270 : 1-14, figs. 1-6.