



A new species of the genus *Scolopsis* Cuvier, 1830 (Perciformes: Nemipteridae) from southern India and Sri Lanka

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Abstract

Scolopsis igcarensis, a new species of monocle bream (family Nemipteridae) from the coastal waters of southern India and Sri Lanka is described. The species is distinguished from other species of the genus *Scolopsis* by a combination of the following characters: scales on top of head reaching forward to between anterior nostril and snout tip; lower margin of eye below the line from snout tip to upper pectoral fin base; a bony ridge below eye; a white band from behind eye to level of end of dorsal fin base.

Key words: taxonomy, Pisces, Nemipteridae, *Scolopsis igcarensis*, new species, India, Sri Lanka

Introduction

The monocle breams of the genus *Scolopsis* Cuvier (Perciformes: Nemipteridae) are small, bottom-dwelling fishes usually occurring in shallow waters up to 60 m depth, mostly on reefs or on sandy or muddy bottoms close to reefs, and widespread in the Indo-west Pacific region (Russell 1990). The genus is distinguished in having a distinct posteriorly directed suborbital spine, no canine teeth on jaws, posterior margin of preopercle coarsely dentate or serrate, dorsal fin with 10 spines and 9 rays, anal fin with 3 spines and 7 rays, and 4 to 7 rows of cheek scales.

Of the 16 species of this genus recognized world-wide (Russell, 1990), some 12 species have been recorded from Indian waters (Barman & Mishra, 2009). During the course of an ichthyofaunal study along the Kalpakkam coast, Tamil Nadu, India, specimens of an unidentified species of *Scolopsis* were collected. The specimens were first collected in July 2008 from the travelling water screens of Madras Atomic Power Station (MAPS) pump house located at the Indira Gandhi Centre for Atomic Research (IGCAR), Kalpakkam (12°33'N, 80°11'E). Additional specimens were later collected from elsewhere along the Kalpakkam coast with the help of local fisher's and from Tuticorin Fishing Harbour (8°49'N, 78°08'E), by K.K. Bineesh. Other specimens from Vizhinjam (8°23'N, 76°59'E), Kerala, India, and Negombo (7°13'N, 79°50'E), Sri Lanka, were located also in Museum collections. Examination of these specimens revealed them to be an undescribed species, which is described herein as new.

Material and methods

Specimens are deposited in the Bernice P. Bishop Museum (BPBM), Honolulu; Central Marine Fisheries Institute (CMFRI), Kochi; and the National Zoological Collections, Zoological Survey of India (ZSI), Kolkata. Comparative material from the Australian Museum (AMS), Sydney; BPBM; Museum and Art Gallery of the Northern Territory, (NTM), Darwin; and ZSI also was examined.