

[Reprint, from J. Bombay nat. Hist. Soc. 70 (2) 392-394 15-2-1974]

Miscellaneous Note

16. *DIODON HOLACANTHUS* LINNAEUS (PISCES: DIODONTIDAE) FROM INDIA

Fishes belonging to the genus *Diodon* (Family: Diodontidae), popularly known as porcupine fishes inhabit coral lagoons of warm oceans. Linnaeus (1758) described *Diodon holacanthus* from India and the species has subsequently been recorded from several parts of the Indo-West Pacific (Herre 1953; Smith 1961; Anon 1962) but surprisingly not rediscovered from India. During a collection tour four topotypes of *D. holacanthus* were collected from Trivandrum (South-west coast of India) and are described below.

***Diodon holacanthus* Linnaeus**

Diodon holacanthus Linnaeus, 1758, Syst. Nat. 10th Ed. 335 (India).

Diodon maculatus var. a, Gunther, 1870, Cat. Fish. Brit. Mus., 8: 307.

Diodon holacanthus Anon, 1962, Fish species of South China Sea: 1100-1102 (China).

Material examined:

4 fishes, 143-161 mm S.L. ex Trivandrum (16:9:1968).

Description:

D13. P21-22, A13, C8-9. Gill-rakers on first arch outer 2+7; inner O+IO.

In percentages of standard length; body depth 26.5-41.0. head length 39.2-43.1, snout length 13.5-16.6, eye diameter 9.2-10.8. postorbital length 18.9-22.7, interorbital width 25.0-34.4, caudal peduncle depth 5.4-6.0, dorsal height 15.7-18.1, anal length 15.7-23.2, pectoral length 17.1-21.5. caudal length 15.7-20.4, height of longest spine in first row 17.8-22.4, height of shortest spine in first row 16.4-18.9, pre-dorsal distance 72.1-84.8, pre-anal distance 72.8-84.4. width of mouth 13.6-14.7.

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Body covered with numerous spines, spines on forehead commencing with level of front border of eye. First transverse row of four spines on forehead longest, on dorsal and ventral sides shortest, on flanks and behind pectorals longer than the latter. Thirteen spines from forehead to the origin of dorsal fin. Origin of pectoral behind gill opening, middle rays shorter. Origin of dorsal nearer to caudal. Origin of anal below origin of dorsal.

Colour. Ground colour generally brown on dorsal side becoming pale yellow or white towards ventral side, broad blackish-brown band between the orbits, interrupted in middle, extending downwards beyond eye; behind this parallel transverse band not descending downwards. Large subtriangular or nearly irregular spot in the middle of back; similar spot on and in advance of the base of dorsal fin. Kidney shaped spot above the pectoral.

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- * Not referred to in original.