

ON THE FORM OF GILLRAKER SERRAE IN THE INDIAN *ILISHA*

WHITEHEAD (1967)¹ described the form of gillraker serrae as a distinguishing character in the species of *Setipinna*. The form of gillraker serrae in the Indian species of *Ilisha* is described in the present note. A slight but recognisable difference is recorded in different species. The genus *Ilisha* is under review by the author and six species are recognised from the Indian waters, viz., *Ilisha megaloptera* (Swainson)⁵, *I. sirishai* Seshagiri Rao³, *I. filigera* (Valenciennes)², *I. elongata* (Bennett)², *I. whiteheadi* Seshagiri Rao⁴ and *I. melastoma* (Schneider)⁵. The form of gillraker serrae in these species has not been described so far.

Examination of gillrakers in the six species of *Ilisha* revealed that the serrae do not form distinct clumps as in *Setipinna taty* or *S. phasa*¹. However the size and arrangement of serrae vary in the different species of *Ilisha*. In *I. megaloptera* the serrae on the upper surface of the gillraker are relatively larger, less numerous and crowded into groups with distinct gaps. Very few serrae are present on flanks. In *I. sirishai* the serrae are relatively smaller, numerous, uniformly distributed over the upper surface, descending on to the upper 1/4 of the flanks. In *I. filigera* the serrae are present in two or three rows on the upper surface with a few larger serrae towards the tip. A row of serrae is present on the lower flank of the gillraker. In *I. elongata* the serrae are more numerous, distributed all over the surface of the gillraker with a few larger serrae towards the tip. In *I. whiteheadi* the serrae are smaller and sparsely distributed over the upper surface and upper 2/3 on flanks. In *I. melastoma* the gillraker serrae are very few, distributed in small groups over the upper surface and upper 1/4 on flanks.

The gillraker serrae in *I. megaloptera* are relatively larger in size, whereas in *I. melastoma* they are smaller. In *I. elongata* numerous serrae are arranged all over the surface of gillraker, whereas in *I. melastoma* their number is too small.

The author is grateful to Professor S. Dutt, Guntur and P. J. P. Whitehead, British Museum (Natural History), London, for encouragement. Thanks are due to N. Bangar Raju, Principal, for encouragement and to the University Grants Commission, New Delhi, for financial assistance.

Zoology Department, B. V. SESHAGIRI RAO.
D.N.R. College, Bhimavaram-534202.
Andhra Pradesh, March 2, 1974.

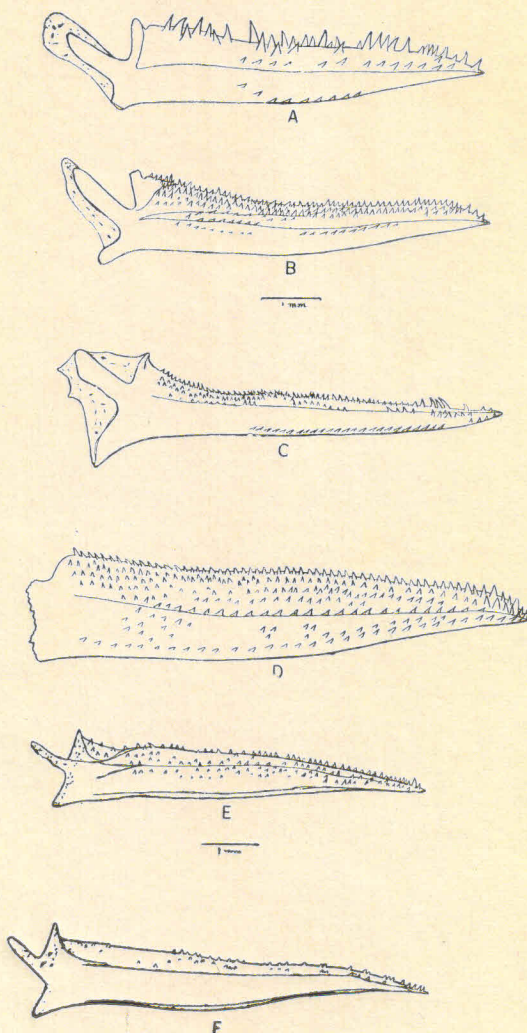


FIG. 1. Gillrakers showing the relative size and arrangement of serrae in *I. megaloptera* (A); *I. sirishai* (B); *I. filigera* (C); *I. elongata* (D); *I. whiteheadi* (E); and *I. melastoma* (F); (first gill arch, 4-5 gillraker on the lower arm from the angle).

1. Whitehead, P. J. P., *J. Mar. biol. Assoc. India*, 1967, 9 (1), 28.
2. —, *Bull. Br. Mus. Nat. Hist. (Zool.)*, Suppl., 1967, 2, 117.
3. Seshagiri, Rao, B. V., *Hydrobiologia*, (In press).
4. —, *Copeia*, 1974, 4, (In press).
5. —, *Ibid.*, 1973, p. 735.