

## Short Communication

### FIRST RECORD OF BLUE-BANDED WRASSE, *XIPHOCHEILUS TYPUS* BLEEKER 1856, FROM INDIA

The fish family Labridae, commonly called as wrasses, is the second largest family of marine fishes in the world, which comprise 71 genera and 520 species (Froese and Pauly, 2015). There occurs 85 species belonging to 28 genera in Indian waters (Gopi and Mishra, 2014). However, it does not include the monotypic genus *Xiphocheilus* Bleeker. Westneat (2001) observed that this genus confined in distribution to the tropical western Pacific, extending into the Indian Ocean only in an area to the west of the Malay Peninsula. Froese and Pauly (2015) followed the same distributional range for this species. On the basis of unpublished photograph of Dr J.E. Randall it was stated therein that this species occurs in India. Possibly Allen and Erdmann (2012) considered Randall's photograph as a record from India and Eschmeyer (2015) followed the same. Although both the specimens photographed by Randall are taken from Chennai, but no substantial record of *Xiphocheilus typus* Bleeker from Indian waters has been published yet.

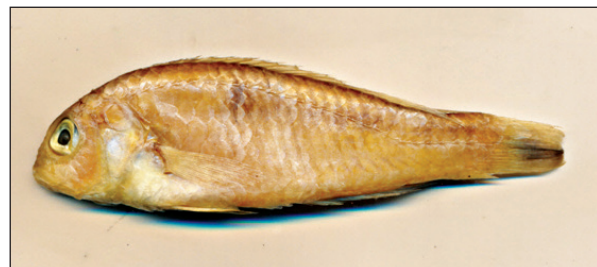
While identifying the old collections in the Marine Fish Section of the Zoological Survey of India, Kolkata, the authors came across four specimens of *Xiphocheilus typus* Bleeker 1856 collected from Tamil Nadu coast. The first author obtained three more specimens from Chennai, Tamil Nadu (13° 07' 44" N, 80° 17' 53" E). Based on these seven specimens, a systematic account of the species (Fig. 1) is presented here to provide first substantial record of *Xiphocheilus typus* from east coast of India.

#### *Xiphocheilus typus* Bleeker 1856

1856. *Xiphocheilos typus* Bleeker, *Natuurk. Tijdschr. Ned. Indie*, **12**: 224 (Nias Island, Indonesia).  
2012. *Xiphocheilus typus*: Allen and Erdmann, *Reef Fishes of the East Indies*, **2**: 726.



A



B

**Fig. 1.** *Xiphocheilus typus* Bleeker from Chennai, Tamil Nadu, India.

A. Male (112.8 mm SL), B. Female (77.5 mm SL).

**Material examined:** F 10824/2, 1 ex. (male), 112.8 mm SL, 2 ex. (female), 77.5 – 104.3 mm SL, Kasimedu, Chennai, Tamil Nadu, S.S. Mishra & party, 31-03-2011; F 11227/2, 4 ex. (female), 80.5 – 100.4 mm SL, Tamil Nadu, R.P. Barman & party, January 2008.

**Diagnostic features:** D XII, 8; A III, 10; P 15; C 10. Body slender, laterally compressed. Body depth 3.3 to 3.7 times in SL; head length 3.0 to

3.1 in SL. Dorsal profile of head convex; snout bluntly rounded; jaws prominent, upper jaw with 2 widely separated prominent anterior canines; 1 or 2 large, curved canines on each side of posterior part of upper jaw; lower jaw also with 2 large anterior canines. Gill rakers 6 on upper limb and 9 on lower limb of first arch. Pelvic fins short, not reaching anus; caudal fin slightly rounded, upper rays slightly longer in male. Lateral line smoothly curved, uninterrupted, with 27 – 28 + 2 pored scales. Predorsal scales 7 to 9, extending to above middle of eye; cheek with 3 rows of scales and opercle covered with large scales; lower jaw naked. Male grey brown dorsally, pale ventrally; a pair of narrow white bands on snout; a narrow white band from posterior part of jaw to nape; narrow white or light blue bands between each scale row on sides of body. Dorsal fin blue with 2 or 3 narrow orange or pink stripes; anal fin yellow-orange with numerous narrow blue bands basally; caudal fin yellow-orange with about 5 to 8 narrow blue bands; caudal fin suffused with black centrally; pectoral fins transparent with a blue band edged with black posteriorly along basal margin on fleshy base of fin; pelvic fins yellowish orange with blue leading edge. Females generally light brown to pinkish with, narrow dark band across pectoral fin base, and a diffuse brown blotch on upper side below base of 5<sup>th</sup> to 7<sup>th</sup> dorsal spine.

*Distribution:* Indo-west Pacific: from east coast of India to north-western Australia, northward to the Philippines and Taiwan.

### DISCUSSION

The monotypic genus *Xiphocheilus* Bleeker of the family Labridae is characterised in having continuous dorsal fin with XII spines and 8 soft rays; upper and lower jaws with 2 prominent canines; cheek covered with scales similar to that of body. Presence of these characters confirmed the species as *Xiphocheilus typus* Bleeker. This forms the first substantial record of *Xiphocheilus typus* from Indian coast. Our largest specimen (male) measures 131.5 mm in total length. This specimen seems to be the biggest in size, as the published maximum total length for this species was 130 mm (Allen and Erdmann, 2012).

### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The authors are thankful to the Director, Zoological Survey of India (ZSI), Kolkata and Shri K.C. Gopi, Scientist-E and Head of Fish Division, ZSI, Kolkata for facilities and permission. They also wish to extend thanks to Dr B.C. Russell, Curator Emeritus of Fishes, Museum & Art Gallery of the Northern Territory, PO Box 4646 Darwin, NT 0801, Australia for his help in identification.

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**S.S. MISHRA\* AND S.C. SAREN**

*Marine Fish Section, Zoological Survey of India, Kolkata-700 016*

\*Email: subhrendumishra@gmail.com