

First record of *Paratriacanthodes retrospinis* Fowler, 1934 (Tetraodontiformes: Triacanthodidae) from India

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ABSTRACT: The Sawspine spikefish, *Paratriacanthodes retrospinis* Fowler, 1934, is reported from Indian waters for the first time, based on specimens collected from Sakthikulangara fishing harbor (08°30' N, 76°53.3' E), Kerala, southwest coast of India. Morphometric and meristic characters of the two specimens obtained correspond with those of *P. retrospinis* published previously.

Spikefishes (Tetraodontiformes: Triacanthodidae) inhabit waters below 50 meters and are distributed in the Atlantic, Indian, and western and central Pacific oceans (Tyler 1968; Matsura and Tyler 1998). Of the 23 species of spikefishes recorded, only two species, namely *Macrorhamphosodes platycheilus* Fowler, 1934 and *Triacanthodes ethiops* Alcock, 1894 have been recorded from the coasts of India (Kapoor *et al.* 2002; Froese and Pauly 2011). *Paratriacanthodes* Fowler, 1934 is one of the morphologically generalized genera of Triacanthodidae (Tyler 1980) and is mainly characterized by the presence of a pair of large ventral fin spines that can be erected ventro-laterally and locked in this position (Tyler 1962). *Paratriacanthodes* is represented by three species namely *P. abei* Tyler, 1997, *P. herrei* Myers, 1934, and *Paratriacanthodes retrospinis* Fowler, 1934 (Froese and Pauly 2011). This paper records *P. retrospinis* Fowler, 1934 for the first time from the Indian coast.

Two specimens were trawled off Kerala (08°30' N, 76°53.3' E), southwest coast of India at a depth of about 50 meters: ZSI/WGRC/IR/V 2083 (Western Ghats Regional Station of Zoological Survey of India, Calicut, Kerala, India), 34.8 mm SL, collected on 23 December 2009; AQB F S469 (Museum of Department of Aquatic Biology and Fisheries, University of Kerala, India), 36.5 mm SL, collected on 28 March 2011. Morphometric and meristic data were gathered following methods described by Strauss and Bond (1990).

The mainly diagnostic features are: dorsal fin VI+14-15; anal fin 13-14; pectoral fin 13; pelvic fin I+1. Body strongly compressed. Head small, conic, its length and width almost equal. Eyes large, 34% of head length, inter-orbital space concave and narrow. Mouth terminal with protrusible lower jaw and small conical teeth. Gill opening a small vertical slit in front of pectoral fin, not reaching lower margin of pectoral-fin base. Scales with rugged upright spinules in horizontal series on body and transverse series on lower half of head. Two dorsal fins; spinous first dorsal

inserted over gill opening. Second dorsal and anal fins soft, without spines. First dorsal spine and pelvic spine with three rows of large antrorse spiny processes along their lengths, and hence the name *retrospinis* (Fowler 1934). Pelvic spine longer than first dorsal spine. Pale pink in color, with three lightly colored lines from lower jaw to anus, which disappears on preservation. Morphometric and meristic data are given in Table 1. The type specimen was described from the South China Sea by Fowler (1934) and reported subsequently from various countries bordering Indo-Pacific, including Hong Kong, Taiwan and Japan (Masuda *et al.* 1984), China, South Africa and Mozambique (Tyler 1986), New Caledonia (Matsuura and Tyler 1997) and Australia (Hutchins 2003). The record of this specimen from the southwest coast of India shows more extensive distribution of *P. retrospinis* in the Indian Ocean.



FIGURE 1. *Paratriacanthodes retrospinis* (ZSI/WGRC/IR/V/2083), 34.8 mm SL, collected from Sakthikulangara fishing harbour, Kerala, India.

TABLE 1. Measurements and counts of *Paratriacanthodes retrospinis* collected from Kerala, India.

CHARACTERS	ZSI/WGRC/IR/V/2083	AQB F S469	FOWLER (1934)
Total length, TL (mm)	45	46.5	114
Standard length, SL (mm)	34.8	36.5	-
Weight (g)	2.5	2.5	-
<i>Measurements in % SL</i>			
Body depth	64.66	65.75	-
Head length	46.26	46.58	-
Head depth	43.10	44.66	-
Post-orbital length	14.94	17.53	-
Eye diameter	15.80	15.89	-
Pre-orbital length	12.64	17.26	-
Pre-dorsal length	52.01	55.34	-
Pre-pectoral length	47.41	48.22	-
Pre-pelvic length	51.72	57.53	-
Pre-anal length	80.17	80.82	-
Caudal peduncle length	9.77	12.88	-
Caudal peduncle depth	9.20	9.59	-
Dorsal-fin length	54.60	52.60	-
Anal-fin length	12.93	14.79	-
Pectoral-fin length	17.53	17.26	-
Pelvic-fin length	34.20	38.90	-
Caudal-fin length	28.74	27.95	-
First dorsal-fin spine length	33.05	31.51	-
Pelvic-fin spine length	37.07	38.90	-
Maxilla length	6.32	6.58	-
Mandible length	3.74	4.93	-
<i>Counts</i>			
Dorsal-fin spines	5	5	5
Dorsal-fin rays	14	15	15
Pectoral-fin rays	13	13	-
Anal-fin rays	13	14	13
Pelvic-fin spines	1	1	-
Pelvic-fin rays	1	1	-

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