

Occurrence of starry handfish, *Haliutaea stellata* in Malabar region



The starry handfish, *Haliutaea stellata* (Val, 1797), belonging to the family Ogcocephalidae is found on the

demersal trawling operations off-Calicut on 19.1.2011. The specimens measuring 121 - 142 mm in length and weighing

continental shelves of the Indo-Pacific oceans at depths of between 50 and 400 m. This fish was not reported from Malabar region earlier. However, of late due to the diversified fishing practices, few numbers of this fish were caught in

20 - 22 g were caught at a depth of 150m. The distinguishing character of this fish is that the body is flattened with broad flat head and disc shaped body with slender tapering tail, mouth small with feeble teeth. No true fin spines. Illicium with trefoil extremity. An armour of bony spiny plates protects the upper surface of the body and is broken by the eyes, close together near the front, and the small gill openings, at the rear of the head disc. The mouth and pelvic fins are on the underside of the disc. It is having a uniform dark pink colour.

(Reported by
P. P. Manojkumar,
Calicut RC)