

# *Platax teira* (Forsskål, 1775)

Rema Madhu and K. Madhu

## IDENTIFICATION

Order	: Perciformes
Family	: Ephippidae
Common/FAO Name (English)	: Longfin batfish



**Local names:** Not available

## MORPHOLOGICAL DESCRIPTION

*Body* is deep and compressed; body depth is 0.9-1.2 times standard length of fish. Juveniles are also deep bodied with very long pelvic fins and long anal and dorsal fins (which shorten on becoming adults). Fins are elevated in both adults and juveniles. The fish is covered with small, ctenoid scales. It has a terminal mouth with bands of tricuspid teeth. Adults are silver-grey in colour, with a dark band through the eye extending to origin of pelvic fin and from base of dorsal fin origin to belly. A black blotch may be present at the terminus of the second band. A small black vertical streak is often present at origin of anal fin. Median fins are with black margins posteriorly. Five pores are on each side of lower jaw. Preopercle is smooth and opercle is without spines. Dorsal spines (total): 5-6; dorsal soft rays (total): 28-37; anal spines: 3 and anal soft rays: 22-28.



## PROFILE

### GEOGRAPHICAL DISTRIBUTION

*Patax teira* is distributed in tropical and subtropical waters of the Indo-West Pacific region from the Red Sea to South Africa, Japan (Hokkaido), Taiwan Province of China, Philippines, Indonesia, New Guinea, northern Australia and Melanesia. It is also reported from Bay of Islands, New Zealand and Persian Gulf.

### HABITAT AND BIOLOGY

Adults are found in sheltered bays, offshore areas, lagoons and seaward reefs. Juveniles are found associated with floating debris and also in shallow reefs. These fish are found in small shoals around shipwrecks. Young fish are usually seen hovering under coral heads or in the shadows of boat moorings. *Patax teira* grows to more than 45 cm in length. It is an omnivore, feeding on plankton and marine algae, invertebrates (small, sessile and benthic) and finfishes and shellfishes (*Nemipterus* spp. and *Penaeus* spp.).

## BREEDING IN CAPTIVE CONDITIONS

Though they are known to be pelagic spawners, detailed information is lacking about the reproduction of this species and they have not been bred in aquariums, neither is there any information on sex differentiation.

## LARVAL REARING

There have been attempts of larval rearing from Australia for studying the species specific behavioural ontogeny to gain an insight into the dispersal of the larvae. However, a detailed report on larval rearing is lacking.

## FOOD AND FEEDING

This species readily accepts a meaty diet of crab meat, mussels, shrimp and scallops. Supplementing the meat diet with brine shrimp and vegetables is also recommended. It should be fed at least 3 times a day.

## GROWTH RATE

Information not available

## DISEASES AND CONTROL MEASURES

Monogenean parasite, *Sprostoniella teria* sp. nov. was reported from gill filaments of this fish in the Gulf of Arabia. Digenetic trematode *Multitestis bengalensis* has been reported from this species. Other digeneans reported are *Neomultitestis aspidogastriformis*, *M. magnacetabulum* and *Diploproctodaeum rutellum*. Parasitic copepods namely, *Caligus rotundigenitalis*, *Anuretes anomalus*, *A. branchialis* and *A. plataxi* have been reported from this species from Taiwan.

## PRODUCTION

Information not available

## MARKET AND TRADE

Kwun Tong in Hong Kong is the largest wholesale market for *Platax teira*.

## CHALLENGES TO MARICULTURE

Basic research involving broodstock development and larval rearing needs to be initiated.

## FUTURE PROSPECTS

*Platax teira* is a very peaceful and social fish and form schools with others of their species. Hatchery production for trade can be practiced once captive breeding and larviculture techniques are standardized. Since it is a popular fish in ornamental fish industry this would be a good income earner for farmers.

## SUGGESTED READING

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