

First record of the goatfish, *Parupeneus heptacanthus* Lacepède, 1801 (Family: Mullidae) at Visakhapatnam Fisheries Harbour

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Goatfishes belonging to the family Mullidae are represented by several genera and species. The goatfish catch forms a significant component of the

trawl landing at Visakhapatnam and contributed to as much as 9.36% of the total demersal catch and 2.25% of the total fish catch of Andhra Pradesh.

Regular observations made on the trawl landing have indicated that four species belonging to single genera, *Upeneus* (*U. vittatus*, *U. sulphureus*, *U. moluccensis* and *U. tragula*) contributed to the goatfish catch at Visakhapatnam. However, on 24th of November 2009, another species of goatfish identified as *Parupeneus heptacanthus* was collected from the trawl catch. The specimen was identified using the key provided in the species identification sheets for fishery purposes FAO – Eastern Indian Ocean, Fishing area 57 and Western Central Pacific fishing area 71- Vol. III. *Parupeneus heptacanthus* is distinguished from other species of goatfishes by the presence of a single row of well-spaced stout conical teeth in jaws, no teeth on the roof of the mouth, three vertical rows of scales in the space between the dorsal fins, nine vertical rows of scales along the upper part of caudal peduncle and a pale reddish spot just below seventh and eighth lateral line scales (Fig. 1). The fish popularly known as cinnabar goatfish was a stray specimen landed along with other goat fishes at Visakhapatnam but is known



Fig. 1. *Parupeneus heptacanthus*

to have a wide distribution along both the coasts of India. This report on the occurrence of *P. heptacanthus* in the trawl catch is however, the first record of its availability in Visakhapatnam. *P. cinnabarinus*, *P. luteus*, *P. pleurospilos* and *P. seychellensis* are some of the other synonyms of *P. heptacanthus*. These synonyms are no longer valid presently (Fishbase). Morphometric measurements of the fish were taken (Table 1), the specimen photographed and preserved in the Marine Fish Museum of the Regional Centre of Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute, Visakhapatnam.

Table 1. Morphometric measurements of *P. heptacanthus* collected at Visakhapatnam Fisheries Harbour on 24th November 2009

Parameter	Measurements (mm)
Total length	241
Fork length	205
Standard length	189
Head length	62
Snout length	33
Body depth	64
Post-orbital length	20
Length of first dorsal fin base	37
Length of second dorsal fin base	33
Length of pelvic fin	39
Length of pectoral fin	37
Length of anal fin	26
Eye diameter	12
Peduncle height	23
Caudal fin length	59
Distance between first and second dorsal fin	16
Number of gill rakers	26
Wet weight	195 g
Sex and Maturity stage	Immature Male, Stage II