

## ***Rabaulichthys stigmaticus* : first record from Sri Lanka (Pisces: Serranidae: Anthiinae)**

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Randall & Pyle (1989) described from four male specimens, *Rabaulichthys stigmaticus*, a new species of anthiine fish from Ari Atoll, north of Bathala Island, Republic of Maldives. The species was not recorded elsewhere until twelve specimens were collected using hand nets ca. 25 m depth from Kalpitiya Reef off northwestern Sri Lanka in March 1992. The only other known species of *Rabaulichthys* is *R. altipinnis* Allen, 1984, from Papua New Guinea.

The twelve specimens comprise ten males (high dorsal fin, see Fig. 1), one female (dorsal fin not elevated, see Fig. 2) and one undetermined (dorsal fin intermediate between the two extremes, emarginate) in the size range 37.1-42.7 mm standard length (SL). According to the collectors, the fish were seen close to the bottom in small groups of 3-8 specimens, the males greatly outnumbering the females. They did not observe any specimens with the blue courtship colouration photographed by Pyle in Randall & Pyle (1989).

The 12 specimens were received alive and were fixed in 10% formalin. The largest specimen, a 42.7 mm SL male, was photographed immediately after the fins were rigid (Fig. 1). Five examples (37.1-41.0 mm SL, including the female, Fig. 2) are now lodged at the Zoological Reference Collection, National University of Singapore, ZRC 20795-20799. Four specimens are lodged in the collection of the Wildlife Heritage Trust of Sri Lanka (WHT 0477) and three in the Collection of Maurice Kottelat (CMK 8839).

These specimens conform closely to the description of Randall & Pyle (1989), though the larger number of specimens now permits the following additions to their description.

Depth (measured at origin of dorsal) 3.9-4.5 in SL (mean 4.2, standard deviation 0.1). TL 122-128% of SL. Pectoral with 19 (3 ex.), 20 (7) or 21 (2) branched rays. Preopercle with 29 to 38 serrae on posterior margin and angle. Interopercle with four to nine denticles on posterior margin near its junction with subopercle. Margin of subopercle smooth (1), or with four to ten minute denticles just above its angle, some only vaguely discernible (11).

13 (8) or 14 (4) fleshy papillae along posterior margin of orbit. Dorsal set in a shallow but distinct groove. First dorsal spine the shortest, longer than the anal spines but shorter than first anal ray. Height of soft dorsal contained 2.2-3.4 in

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Figure 1. *Rabaulichthys stigmaticus* 42.7mm SL male, now WHT0477 .

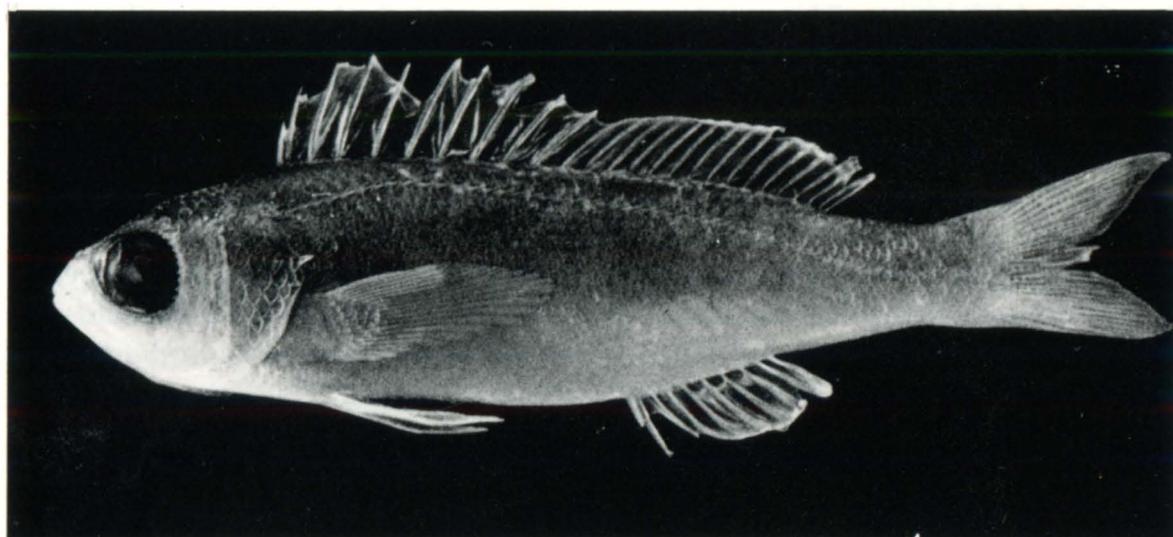


Figure 2. *Rabaulichthys stigmaticus* female, ZRC 20795, 41.0 mm SL.

height of spinous dorsal in males (1.6 in female). Third (4 ex.) fourth (7) or fifth (1) dorsal spine the longest, 2.4-4.7 in SL (11 males), 7.8 in SL in female (measured in a straight line from base of spine to tip, with the fin erect). Spinous dorsal emarginate (9) or with the spines slightly produced (3). Interspinal dorsal fin membrane of female prolonged into short, pennant-like filaments behind tips of second to tenth spines.

#### Acknowledgements

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#### Literature cited

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