

## SHORT COMMUNICATION

### *Myripristis adusta* and *M. violacea*: two new records of holocentrid fishes from Sri Lanka

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#### Introduction

Randall & Greenfield (1996) revised the genus *Myripristis*, providing distribution maps for all known species based on specimens examined, underwater-photographs and literature. They recorded only three species of *Myripristis* from Sri Lanka. During a visit to Sri Lanka in march 1997 I found two further species of that genus, of which this is the first record.

#### Material and methods

The coral reefs at Hikkaduwa (south-western Sri Lanka) were investigated by snorkel-diving. The fish seen were photographed underwater using a Nikon F 601 camera in a waterproof housing, using an electronic flash-light.

#### Results and discussion

Randall & Greenfield (1996) record only the following species of *Myripristis* from Sri Lanka: *M. chryseres*, *M. botche* and *M. pralinia* (they ignored Munro, 1955), which contained different records: *M. pralinus* and *M. murdjan*. *Myripristis pralinus* is the above *M. pralinia*, but the description of *M. murdjan* is too vague to permit definitive diagnosis. The English name 'Black-tipped Soldier Fish' suggests *M. botche* or *M. adusta*, but neither of them is red.

While snorkeling along the very shallow coral reefs off Hikkaduwa, I observed and photographed specimens of *M. adusta* and *M. violacea*, not previously recorded from Sri Lanka.

*Myripristis adusta* (Fig. 1) was found in small groups during daytime in channels between live and/or dead corals and in crevices, from 2 to 5 m depth. It is easily recognized by its dark-edged soft dorsal fin, anal and caudal fins. It was very shy and could not be approached closely. This new record is not unexpected as the species is known from nearby India, the Laccadive Islands, the Maldives and the Andaman Islands (Randall & Greenfield, 1996).

*Myripristis violacea* (Fig. 2) occurred quite frequently under ledges, under leafy live corals, in channels between live and/or dead corals, alone or in small groups, sometimes together with *M. pralinia* in depths of 1-5 m. It can be recognized by its violet-silvery ground colour, dark-rimmed scales and fins with red distal parts. The nearest places of occurrence of this species to Sri Lanka are the Maldives and north-west-Sumatra (Randall & Greenfield, 1996),

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so the present record is the northernmost one in the Indian Ocean and the first one from the Indian continental shelf.

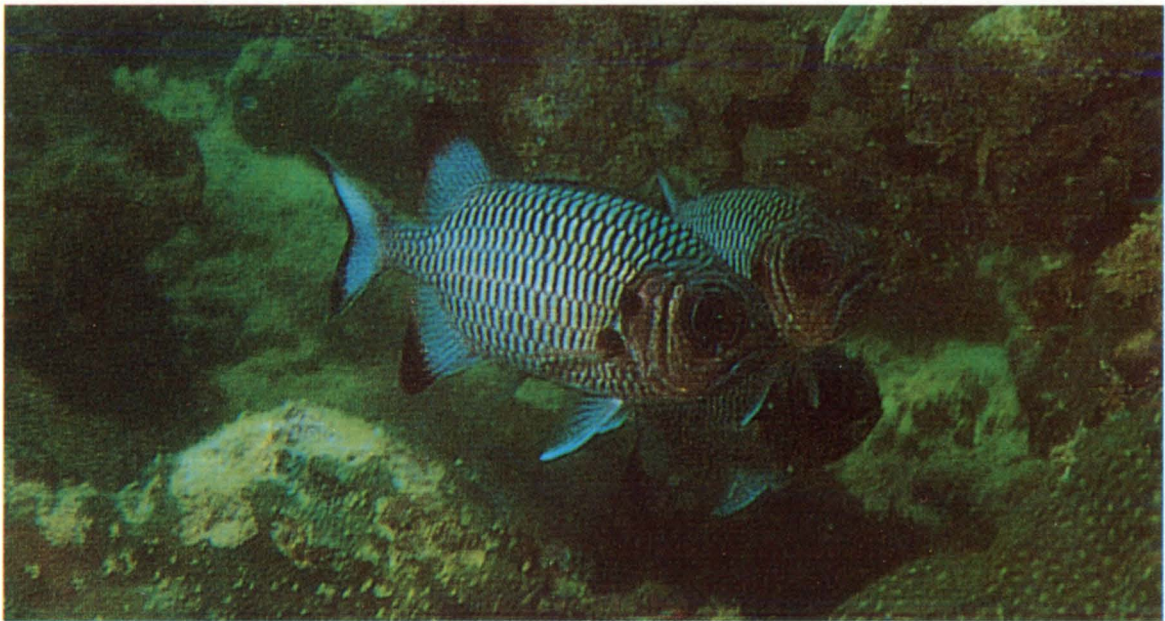
### Acknowledgments

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### Literature cited:

Munro J. S., 1955. The Marine and Fresh Water Fishes of Ceylon, Canberra. 295pp., 56 pls.

Randall J. & D. W. Greenfield, 1996. Revision of the Indo-Pacific holocentrid fishes of the genus *Myripristis* with description of three new species. Indo-Pacific Fishes 25: 1-61, Bishop Mus., Honolulu.



**Figure 1.** A small group of *Myripristis adusta* in an underwater channel off Hikkaduwa, south-western Sri-Lanka.



**Figure 2.** *Myripristis violacea* in the coral reefs off Hikkaduwa.