

FAO SPECIES IDENTIFICATION SHEETS

FISHING AREA 51
(W. Indian Ocean)

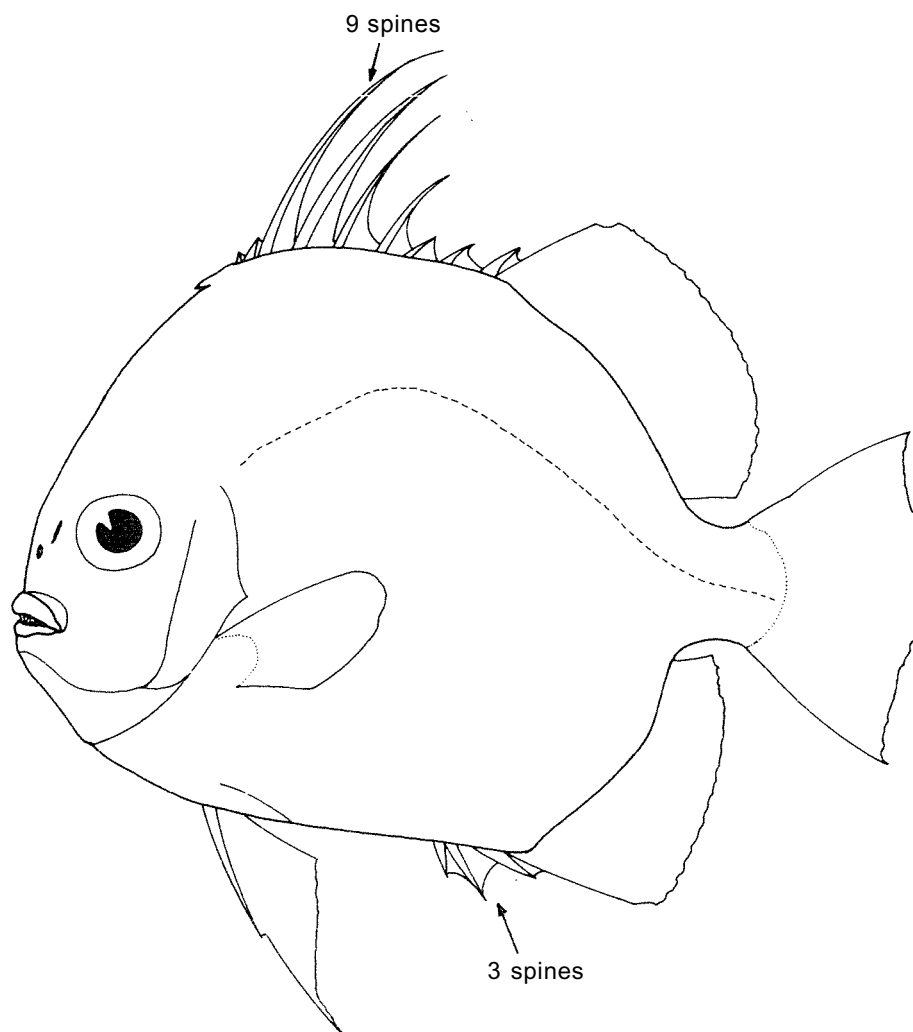
EPHIPPIDAE

Spadefishes

(some authors place in this family the Drepanidae and Platacidae)

Body very deep to almost orbicular, strongly compressed. Head short, its profile either steep or fairly convex; most of head naked or densely covered with irregular scales, but no scales on preopercular flange or in the preorbital region between mouth and eye; gill membranes broadly attached to isthmus; mouth horizontal, small to minute, slightly protrusible only in Tripterodon orbis; end of maxilla concealed; teeth either setiform, numerous, disposed in bands, or large, incisiform, tricuspid, set in 3 or 4 series in each jaw. Dorsal fin with 9 spines (young said to have a procumbent point before first dorsal spine); interspinous membranes deeply incised, occasionally filamentous; spinous part of dorsal fin separated from the soft part by a deep notch; pectoral fins rounded, small; pelvic fins thoracic, pointed, with an axillary process; anal fin with 3 spines; caudal fin distally more or less sigmoid - shaped, with an obtuse median angular process. Lateral line angularly arched. Scales moderate to small.

Colour: silvery grey to greenish; body with 4 to 10 vertical bands fading with age.



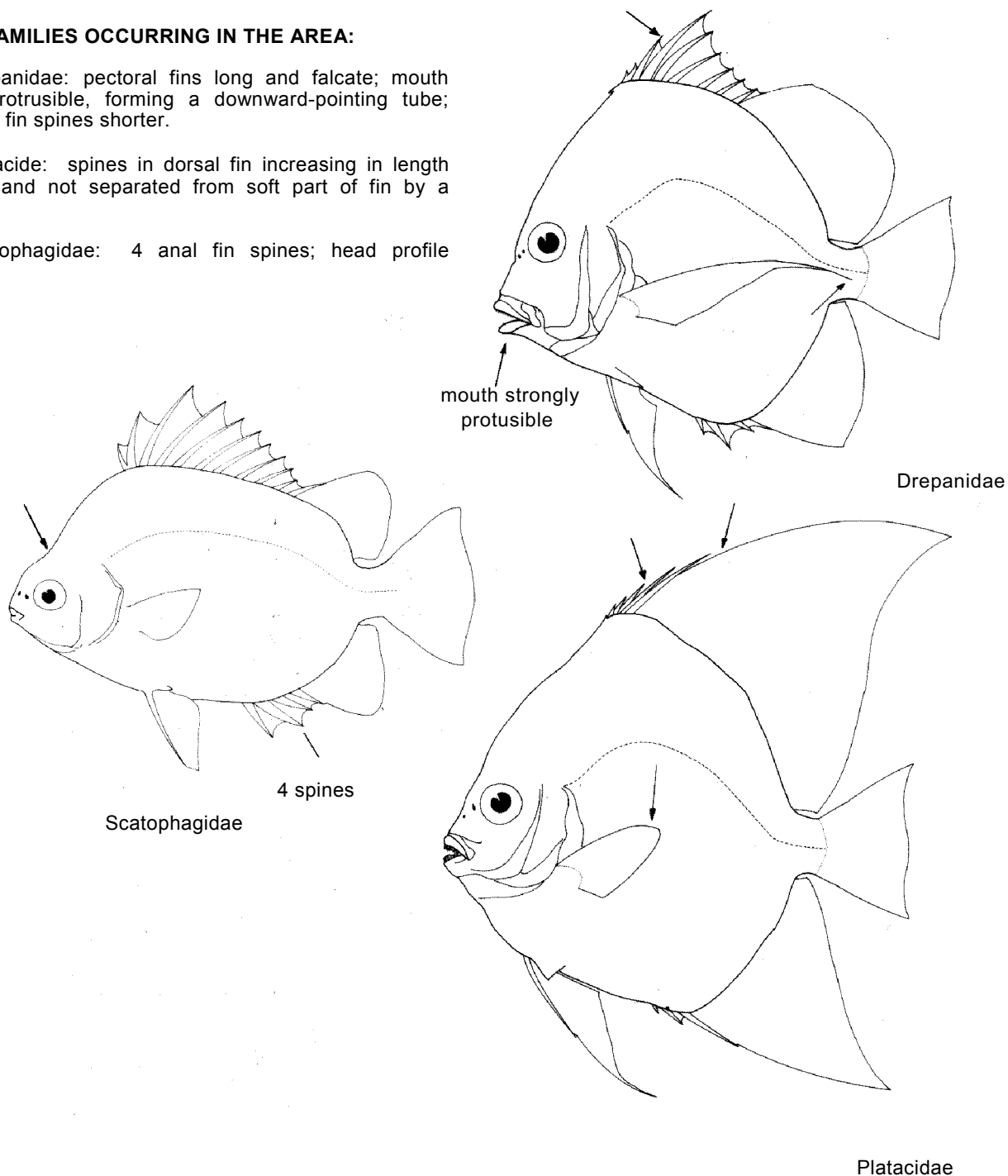
Spadefishes are inhabitants of inshore tropical reefs in depths to about 30 m. Most species are found in the Indo-West Pacific. They frequent rocky or reef areas as well as wrecks and pilings, sometimes forming schools of up to 500 or more individuals. They feed on a variety of invertebrates, both benthic and planktonic. Caught mainly with nets and trawl gear, and marketed fresh. The flesh is of good quality.

SIMILAR FAMILIES OCCURRING IN THE AREA:

Drepanidae: pectoral fins long and falcate; mouth distinctly protrusible, forming a downward-pointing tube; also, dorsal fin spines shorter.

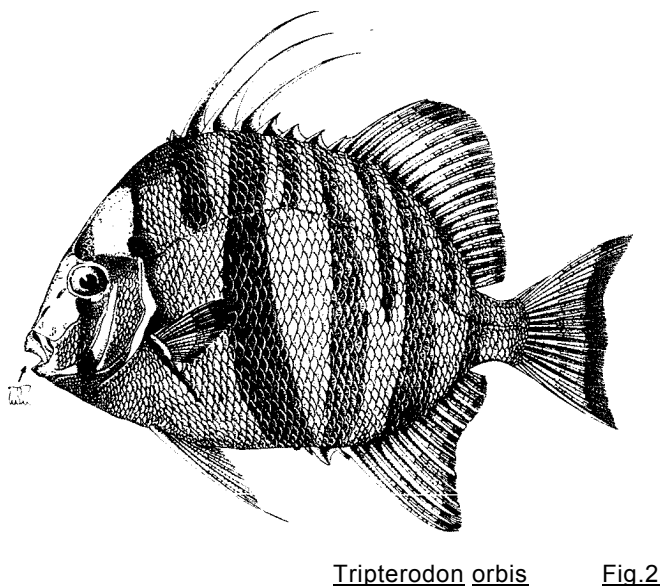
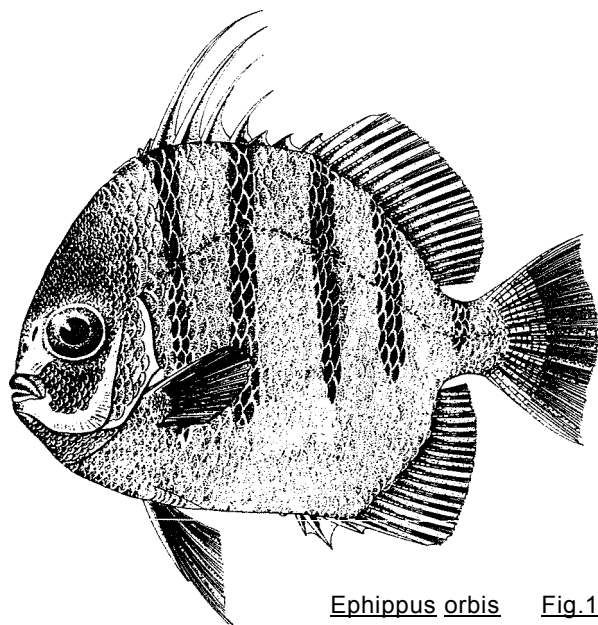
Platacidae: spines in dorsal fin increasing in length posteriorly and not separated from soft part of fin by a notch.

Scatophagidae: 4 anal fin spines; head profile concave.



KEY TO SPECIES OCCURRING IN THE AREA:

- 1a. Shape orbicular, with a steep upper profile, teeth setiform, in bands; eye diameter not shorter than distance from mouth to eye margin; top of head densely scaled; not more than 4 vertical dusky bars on body, none through eye (Fig.1)..... Ehippus orbis
- 1b. Shape more oblong, with a rather convex profile; teeth large, tricuspid, in 4 upper and 3 lower series; eye diameter about half of distance from mouth to eye margin; top of head naked; 9 or 10 dusky vertical bars, the first through eye (Fig.2) Tripteron orbis



LIST OF SPECIES OCCURRING IN THE AREA:

Code numbers are given for those species for which Identification Sheets are included

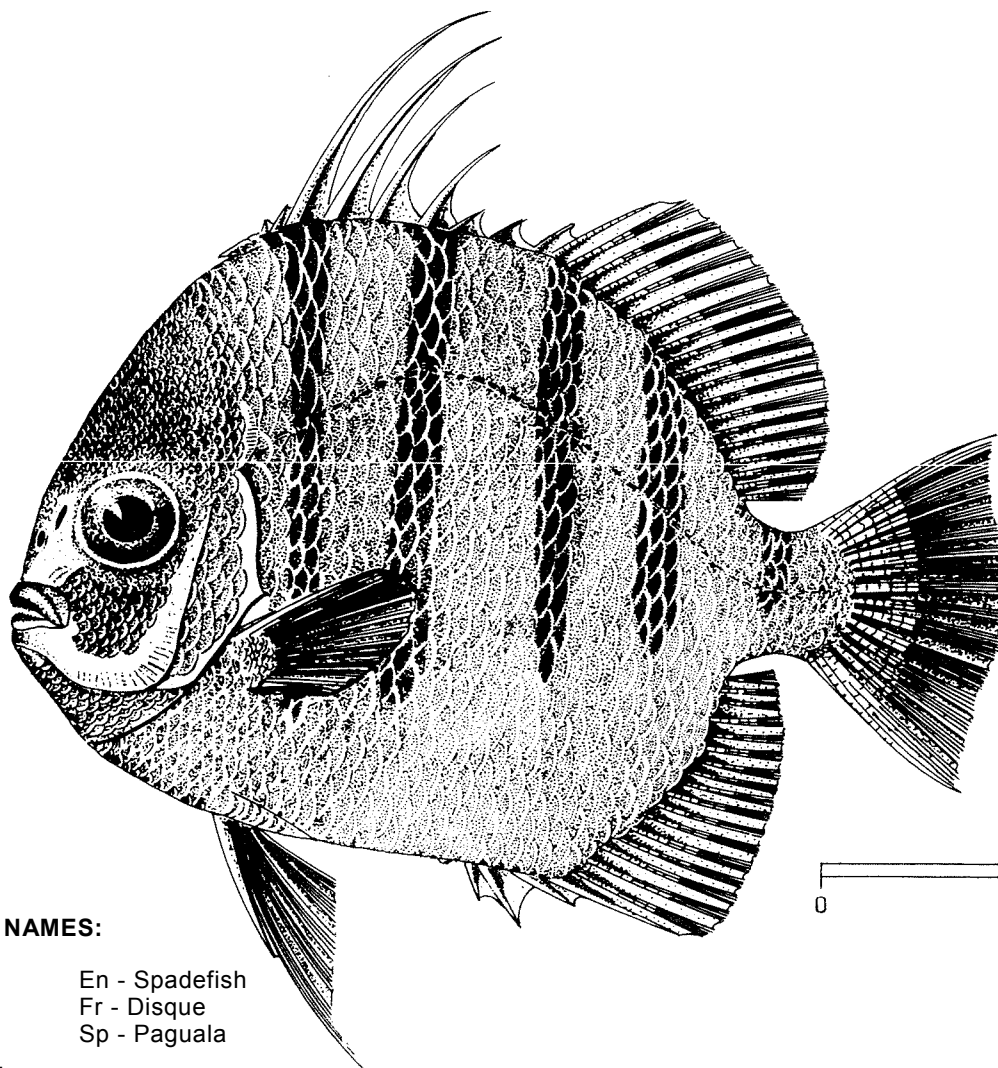
<u>Ehippus orbis</u> (Bloch, 1787)	EPHIP Ehip 1
<u>Tripteron orbis</u> (Playfair, 1866)	EPHIP Trip 1

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FAO SPECIES IDENTIFICATION SHEETS

FAMILY: EPHIPPIDAE

FISHING AREA 51
(W. Indian Ocean)Ehippus orbis (Bloch, 1787)OTHER SCIENTIFIC NAMES STILL IN USE : Chaetodon orbis Bloch, 1787

VERNACULAR NAMES:

FAO: En - Spadefish
Fr - Disque
Sp - Paguala

NATIONAL:

DISTINCTIVE CHARACTERS:

Body deep, nearly circular, strongly compressed, not angular at dorsal and anal fin origin. Eye diameter not shorter than distance from mouth to eye margin; mouth small, terminal, not protrusible; teeth in bands, setiform, none on palate; top of head densely scaled; opercle covered with scales almost to its ventral edge. First dorsal fin with 1 forward-pointing spine (visible only in young specimens), 9 normal spines, and 19 or 20 soft rays, the 4th dorsal spine longest; pectoral fins short and rounded; anal fin with 3 spines and 15 or 16 soft rays. Scales small, finely ciliated, extending onto soft parts of vertical fins.

Colour: 4 or 5 vertical black bars on body from dorsal fins almost to belly; margins of soft dorsal, pelvic, anal and caudal fins dusky black. Young individuals are reported to have a dark bar through eye and another one on nape.

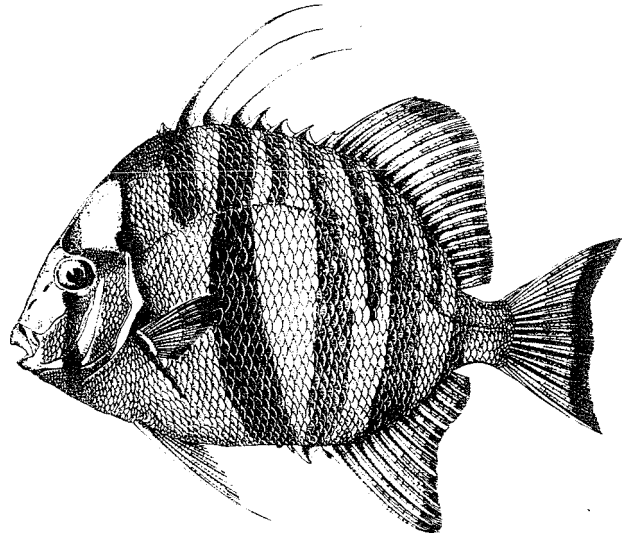
DISTINGUISHING CHARACTERS OF SIMILAR SPECIES OCCURRING IN THE AREA:

Tripterodon orbis: shape more oblong; teeth large, tricuspid; eye diameter about half of distance from mouth to eye; top of head naked, 9 or 10 dusky vertical bars, the first through eye.

Species of Drepanidae: pectoral fins long, falcate; mouth protrusible, forming a downward-directed tube; also, dorsal fin spines shorter.

Species of Platacidae: spines of dorsal fin increasing in length posteriorly; no notch between spinous and soft parts of dorsal fin.

Species of Scatophagidae: 4 anal spines; also, head profile concave above snout.



Tripterodon orbis

SIZE:

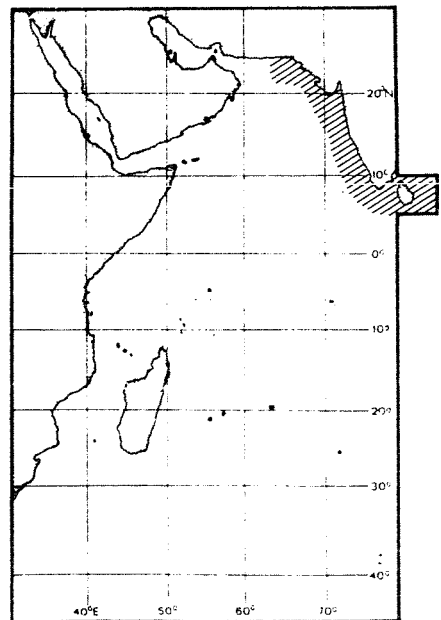
Maximum: 25 cm; common to 15 cm.

GEOGRAPHICAL DISTRIBUTION AND BEHAVIOUR:

Within the area, known from the coasts of Pakistan, India and Sri Lanka. Eastward extending to Malaysia, Indonesia, the Philippines, Australia and Taiwan Island.

Found in shallow water in depths of 10 to 30 m.

Feeds on bottom living invertebrates and fishes.



PRESENT FISHING GROUNDS:

Throughout its range.

CATCHES, FISHING GEAR AND FORMS OF UTILIZATION:

Separate statistics are not reported for this species.

Caught mainly with handlines and traps.

Marketed fresh.

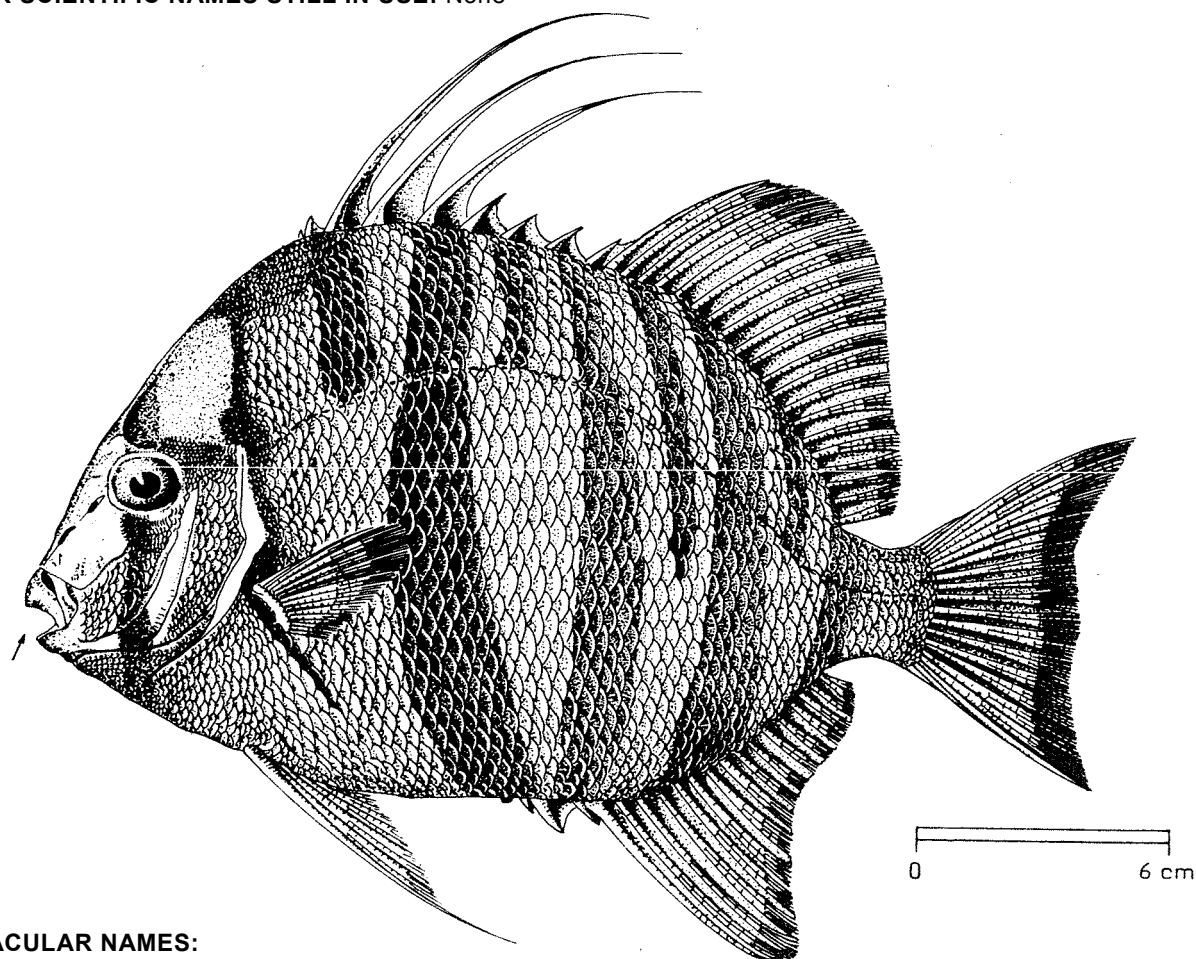
FAO SPECIES IDENTIFICATION SHEETS

FAMILY: EPHIPPIDAE

FISHING AREA 51
(W. Indian Ocean)

<i>Tripterodon orbis</i> Playfair, 1866

OTHER SCIENTIFIC NAMES STILL IN USE: None



VERNACULAR NAMES:

FAO : En - African spadefish
 Fr - Disque africain
 Sp - Paguala africana

NATIONAL:

DISTINCTIVE CHARACTERS:

Body deep, somewhat oblong, front profile parabolic. Mouth small, terminal, with thick lips; large movable tricuspid teeth, in several rows in both jaws; roof of mouth toothless; top of head and preopercular flange without scales; opercle covered with scales almost to its ventral edge. First dorsal fin with 9 spines and 19 to 21 soft rays, the spines rather feeble, broad, elongate, 3rd spine longest; pectoral fins short and rounded; pelvic fins present; anal fin with 3 spines and 15 to 17 soft rays. Scales small, finely ciliated, extending onto soft parts of vertical fins.

Colour: silvery grey, with 9 or 10 somewhat indistinct darker crossbars, fading with age, the first through eye.

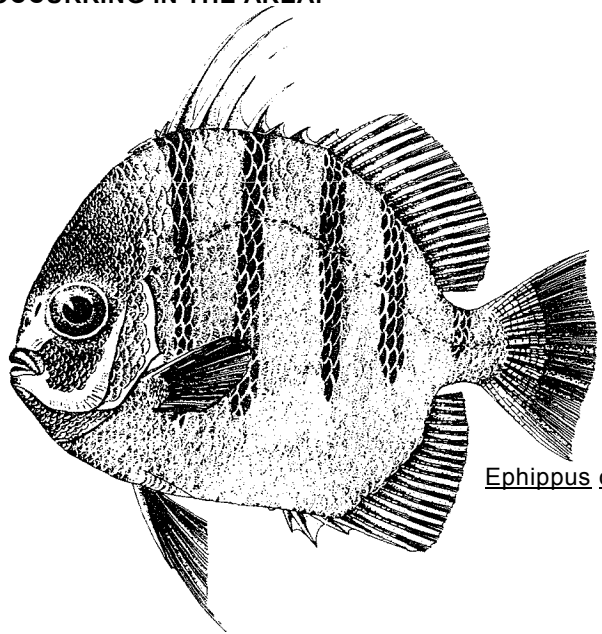
DISTINGUISHING CHARACTERS OF SIMILAR SPECIES OCCURRING IN THE AREA:

Ehippus orbis: shape orbicular; teeth setiform, in bands; eye diameter not shorter than distance from mouth to eye; top of head densely scaled; not more than 4 vertical dusky bars on body (except in juveniles).

Species of Drepanidae: pectoral fins long, falcate; mouth protrusible, forming a downward-pointing tube; also, dorsal fin spines shorter.

Species of Platacidae: spines of dorsal fin increasing in size posteriorly and not separated from soft part of fin by a notch.

Species of Scatophagidae: 4 anal spines; snout profile concave.



Ehippus orbis

SIZE:

Maximum: 75 cm; common to 30 cm.

GEOGRAPHICAL DISTRIBUTION AND BEHAVIOUR:

East coast of Africa from Natal northward to Mombasa and Zanzibar.

Found in shallow water about reefs.

Feeds by nibbling at organisms on rocks and coral.

PRESENT FISHING GROUNDS:

Throughout its range, but nowhere abundant.

CATCHES, FISHING GEAR AND FORMS OF UTILIZATION:

Separate statistics are not reported for this species.

Caught mainly with handlines and traps.

Marketed fresh.

