

FAO SPECIES IDENTIFICATION SHEETS

FISHING AREA 51
(W. Indian Ocean)

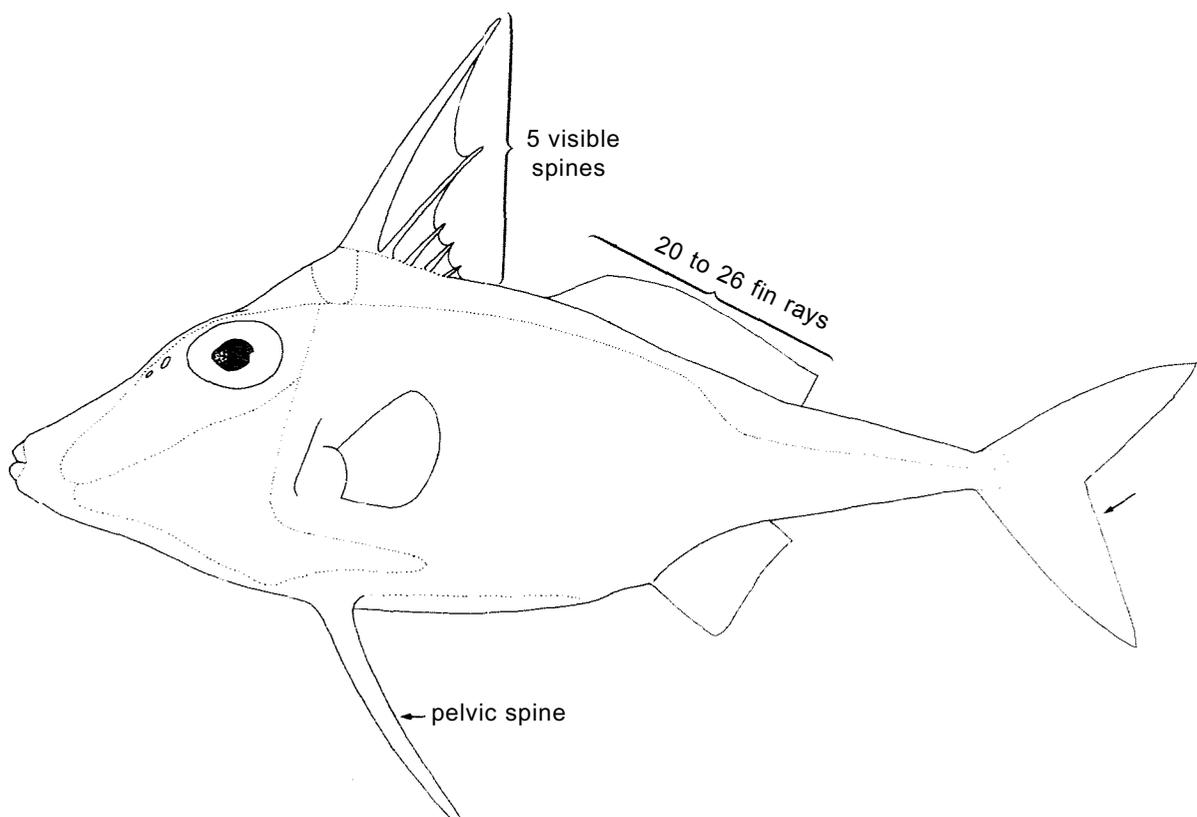
TRIACANTHIDAE

Tripodfishes,triplespines

Small fishes, up to 30 cm in length, with deep compressed bodies; skin moderately thick with numerous scales not individually easily discernible to the unaided eye, each scale bearing upright spinules and having a rough, shagreen-like appearance. Gill opening a relatively short vertical slit in front of pectoral fin base; mouth small and usually terminal; teeth in an outer series of about 10 heavy incisors in each jaw, internal to which are several molariform teeth, usually 4 in upper jaw and 2 in lower jaw. Dorsal fin spines 6 (usually only 5 visible, the 6th being a rudiment), dorsal fin rays 20 to 26, anal fin rays 13 to 22; caudal fin deeply forked and caudal peduncle distinctly tapered; pelvic fin represented by a large spine which is movably articulated with anterior end of pelvis and capable of being locked erect by a flange on they pelvis; most dorsal, anal and pectoral fin rays branched. Lateral line inconspicuous.

Colour: generally silvery, with upper half of body dusky, with or without darker blotches.

Tripodfishes are benthic, occurring usually on flat, sandy or weed-covered bottoms. They feed on bottom-living invertebrates. In some areas they are considered trashfish, however, they are often consumed in several countries bordering the Western Indian Ocean.



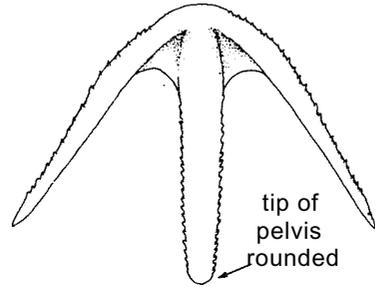
SIMILAR FAMILIES OCCURRING IN THE AREA:

Triacanthodidae: dorsal fin rays 12 to 18 (20 to 26 in Triacanthidae); caudal fin round to almost truncate; caudal peduncle not distinctly tapered; some genera with snouts produced into long tubes.

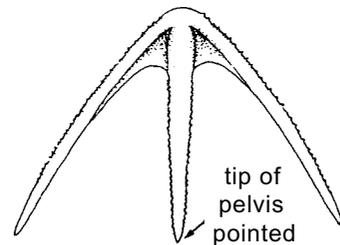
Other plectognath genera: all lack the prominent pelvic spine.

KEY TO SPECIES OCCURRING IN THE AREA:

- 1a. Scale-covered ventral surface of pelvis almost as wide anteriorly as posteriorly, not distinctly tapered to a point (Fig.1a); length of second dorsal fin spine not greater than half the length of first dorsal spine (Fig.2) Triacanthus
- 1b. Scale-covered ventral surface of pelvis much wider anteriorly than posteriorly, distinctly tapered to a point (Fig.1b); length of second dorsal fin spine (if not broken) more than half the length of first dorsal spine (Fig.3) Pseudotriacanthus

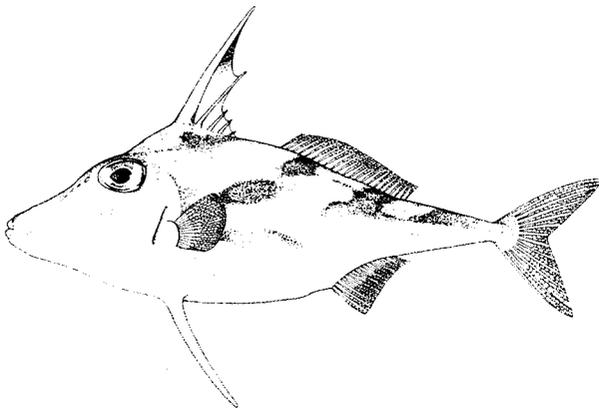


a) Triacanthus aculeatus



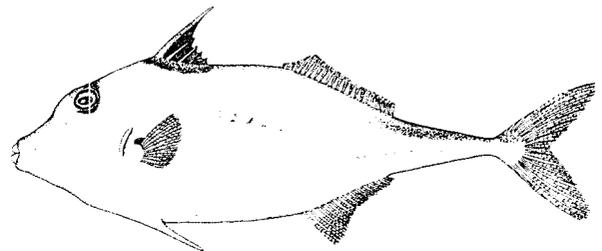
b) Pseudotriacanthus strigilifer
ventral view of pelvis and pelvic fins

Fig.1



Pseudotriacanthus strigilifer

Fig. 3



Triacanthus biaculeatus

Fig.2

LIST OF SPECIES OCCURRING IN THE AREA:

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

Pseudotriacanthus strigilifer (Cantor, 1849)

TRIACANTH Pseud 1

Triacanthus biaculeatus (Bloch, 1786)

TRIACANTH Triac 1

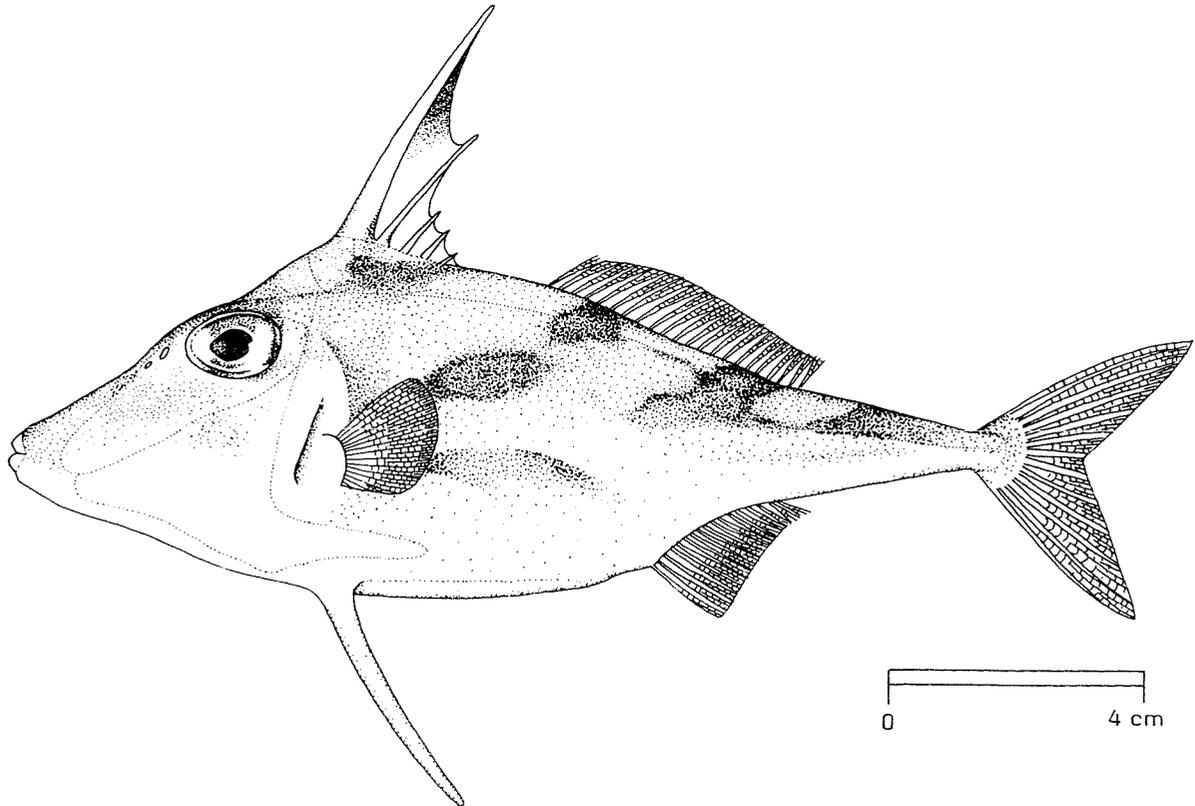
Prepared by B. Hutchins, Western Australian Museum, Perth, Australia; revised by J.C. Tyler, Division of Environmental Biology, National Science Foundation, Washington, DC: 20550, USA

FAO SPECIES IDENTIFICATION SHEETS

FAMILY : TRIACANTHIDAE

FISHING AREA 51
(W. Indian Ocean)Pseudotriacanthus strigilifer (Cantor, 1849)

OTHER SCIENTIFIC NAMES STILL IN USE: None



VERNACULAR NAMES:

FAO : En - Long-spined tripodfish
 Fr - Tripodin épineux
 Sp - Tripodín espinudo

NATIONAL:

DISTINCTIVE CHARACTERS:

Body moderately deep and compressed. Snout acute, the upper profile concave; postorbital profile of head to origin of spinous dorsal fin straight to convex. Dorsal fin spines 5, the second more than half the length of the first spine, remaining spines very short; soft dorsal fin rays 20 to 24, anal fin rays 13 to 17; anal fin base short, contained approximately 2 times in length of soft dorsal base; ventral surface of pelvis tapering prominently to an acute, slender tip.

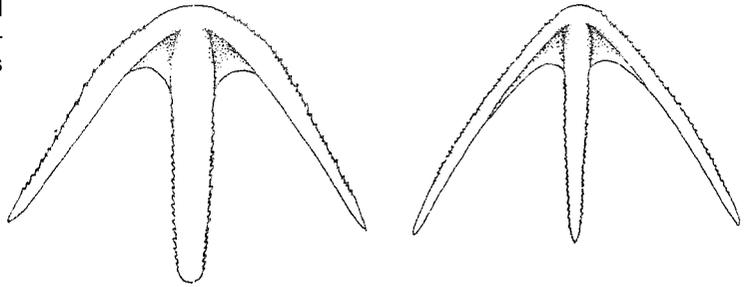
Colour: upper half of head and body dusky silver, and lower half silvery, with large, elongate, brown to orange blotches, usually with darker margins; distal two-thirds of first dorsal fin spine usually blackish, other spines white; soft dorsal and caudal fin rays dusky, the membranes hyaline; other fins whitish, with a dusky blotch on the pectoral fin base and in the axil; a yellow spot sometimes present on midside of caudal fin base.

DISTINGUISHING CHARACTERS SIMILAR SPECIES OCCURRING IN THE AREA:

Tricanthus biaculeatus: scale-covered ventral surface of pelvis slightly tapered to a round posterior end; length of second dorsal fin spine much less than half the length of first spine,

SIZE:

Maximum: 25 cm; common to 20 cm.



Tricanthus biaculeatus

Pseudotaiacanthus strigilifer

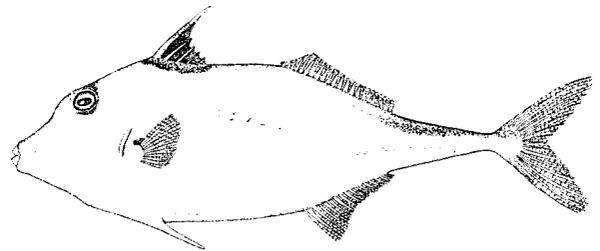
pelvis and pelvic fins

GEOGRAPHICAL DISTRIBUTION AND BEHAVIOUR:

Coastal waters of the Arabian Sea, from Sri Lanka to the Gulf of Oman. Also extends eastward to Indonesia and the Philippines.

Moderately common off the coast of India in depths to 110 m where it prefers flat bottoms.

Feeds on benthic invertebrates.



Tricanthus biaculeatus

PRESENT FISHING GROUNDS:

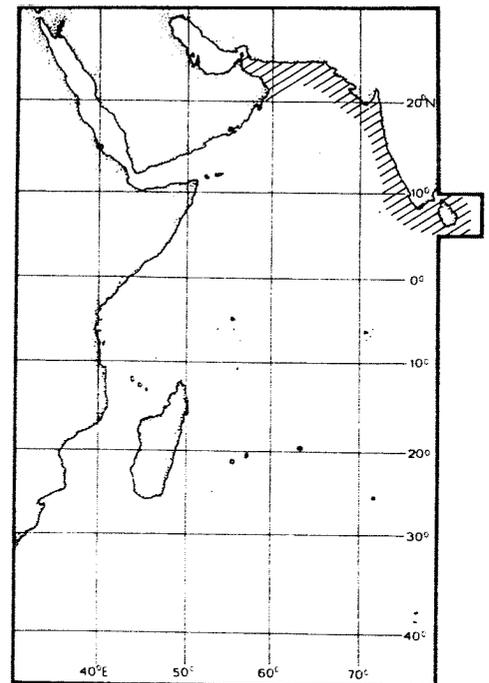
Coastal waters throughout its range.

CATCHES, FISHING GEAR AND FORMS OF UTILIZATION:

Separate statistics are not reported for this species.

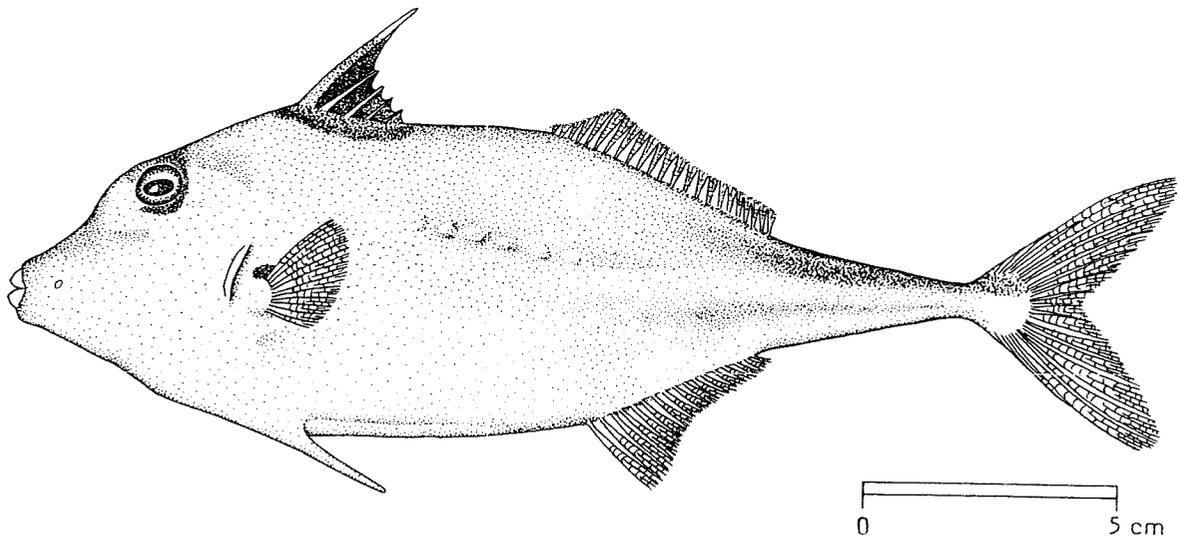
Taken by bottom trawl and shore seines.

Marketed fresh.



FAO SPECIES IDENTIFICATION SHEETS

FAMILY: TRIACANTHIDAE

FISHING AREA 51
(W. Indian Ocean)Triacanthus biaculeatus (Bloch, 1786)OTHER SCIENTIFIC NAMES STILL IN USE : Triacanthus brevirostris Temminck & Schlegel, 1850

VERNACULAR NAMES:

FAO : En - Short-nosed tripodfish
 Fr - Tripodin nez court
 Sp - Tripodín nato

NATIONAL:

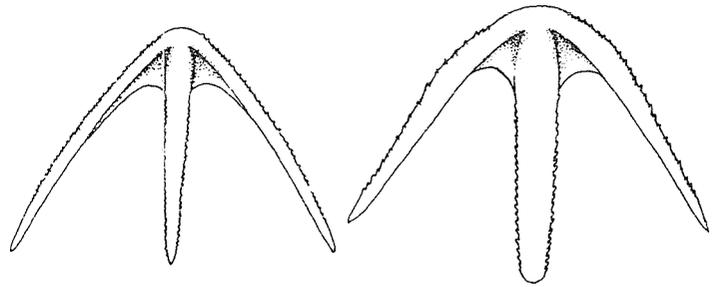
DISTINCTIVE CHARACTERS:

Body deep and compressed. Snout moderately acute, the upper profile straight to concave; postorbital profile of head to origin of spinous dorsal fin either convex, straight or convex before first dorsal spine and straight or concave over eye. Visible dorsal fin spines 5, the second much less than half the length of the first; second dorsal fin rays 21 to 26, anal fin rays 17 to 22; ventral surface of pelvis slightly tapered to a round posterior end.

Colour: upper side dusky silver and lower side creamy silver, with a silvery stripe along midside of body that is continued anteriorly over pectoral fin base to lower lip and dorsally to eye; anterior three-quarters of spinous dorsal fin membrane black, the posterior quarter yellow (in small individuals, this yellow coloration may be absent); basal half of first dorsal fin spine blackish, becoming whiter toward the tip; other fins (except pelvic) yellowish to brownish, the pectoral fin prominently yellow; pectoral fin axil dusky.

DISTINGUISHING CHARACTERS OF SIMILAR SPECIES OCCURRING IN THE AREA:

Pseudotriacanthus strigilifer: scale-covered ventral surface of pelvis distinctly tapered to a point; length of second dorsal spine (if not broken) more than half the length of the first spine.



Pseudotriacanthus strigilifer *Triacanthus biaculeatus*

pelvis and pelvic fins

SIZE:

Maximum: 30 cm; common to 25 cm.

GEOGRAPHICAL DISTRIBUTION AND BEHAVIOUR:

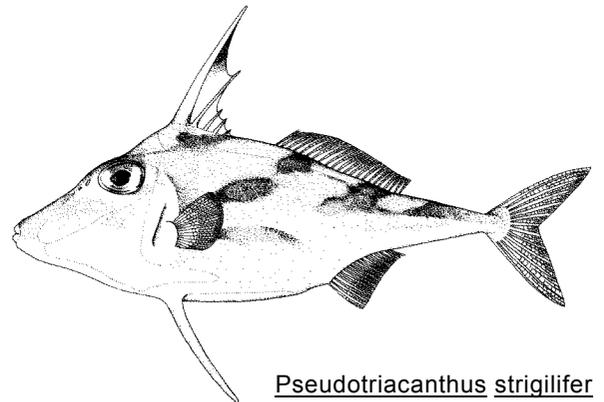
Coastal waters of the Arabian Sea, from Sri Lanka to the "Gulf". Also found in the eastern Indian Ocean, its range extending as far north as southern Japan and as far east as eastern Australia.

Found on flat bottoms both in shallow coastal waters and estuarine areas to depths of 60 m.

Feeds on benthic invertebrates.

PRESENT FISHING GROUNDS:

In shallow coastal waters and brackish waters throughout its range. One of the most commonly caught plectognath fishes in the Indian region of the area.



Pseudotriacanthus strigilifer

CATCHES, FISHING GEAR AND FORMS OF UTILIZATION:

Separate statistics are not reported for this species.

Taken by bottom trawl and gillnets (drifting and fixed).

Marketed fresh.

