

FAO SPECIES IDENTIFICATION SHEETS

FISHING AREA 51
(w. Indian Ocean)

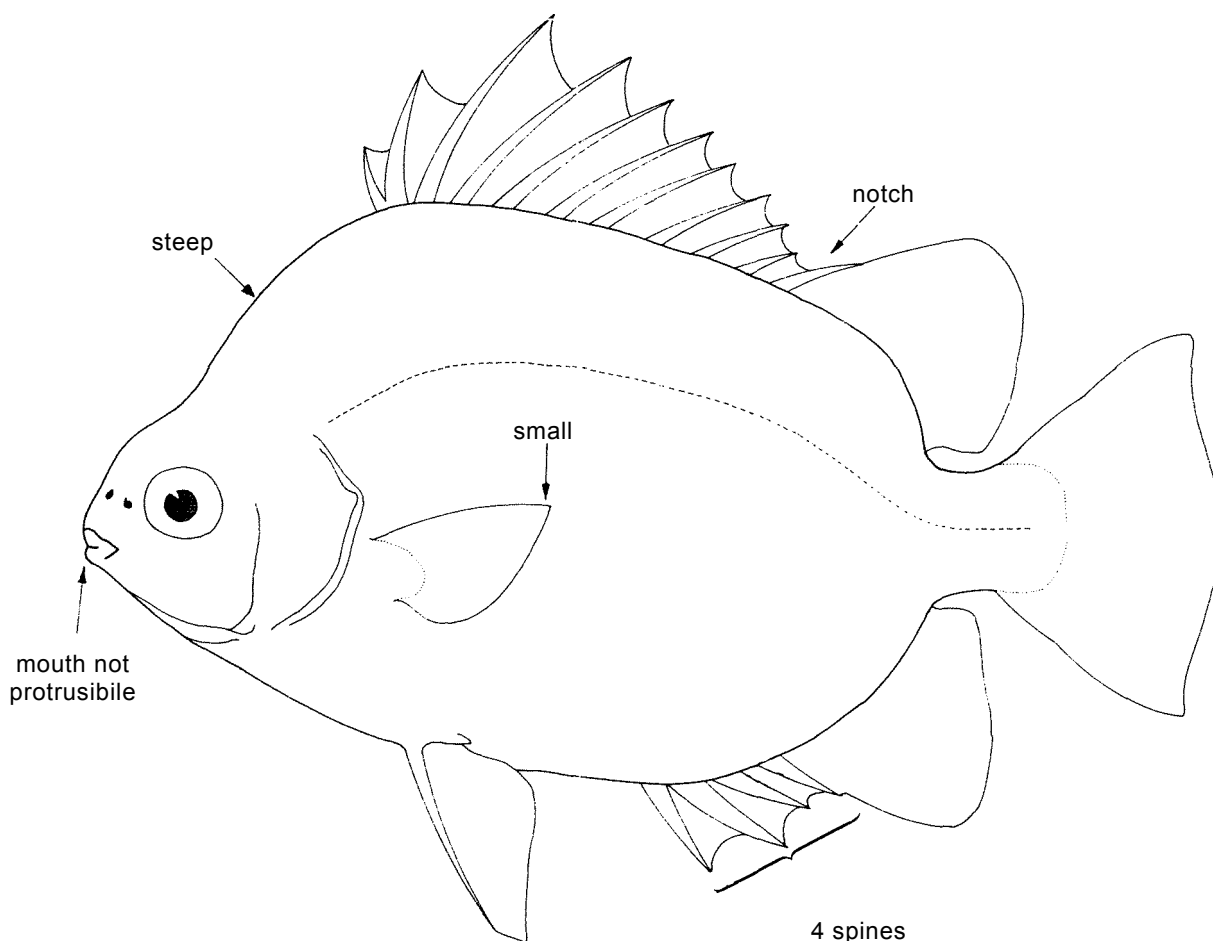
SCATOPHAGIDAE

Scats

Highly compressed, quadrangular shaped fishes. Head profile rising steeply to nape, snout and interorbital space rounded; mouth small, horizontal, not protrusible; teeth in several rows, very small and brush-like; palate toothless. Dorsal fin with 11 or 12 strong spines and 16 to 18 soft rays, the first spine procumbent; a deep notch between spinous and soft portions of fin; anal fin with 4 strong spines and 13 to 16 soft rays; pectoral fins relatively small, with 16 or 17 rays; caudal fin truncate or slightly emarginate (rounded in juveniles). Head and body covered with very small ctenoid scales which extend onto soft dorsal and anal fins. Bones of opercular series without spines or serrations.

Colour: silvery or greenish with dark spots or bars.

Scats are small fishes found in harbours, brackish estuaries, and the lower reaches of freshwater streams. They usually occur in aggregations and feed diurnally on a variety of benthic invertebrates, bottom detritus, algae, and garbage. Because of their small size they have little value as food. Those which appear in markets are taken mainly with gillnets and traps.

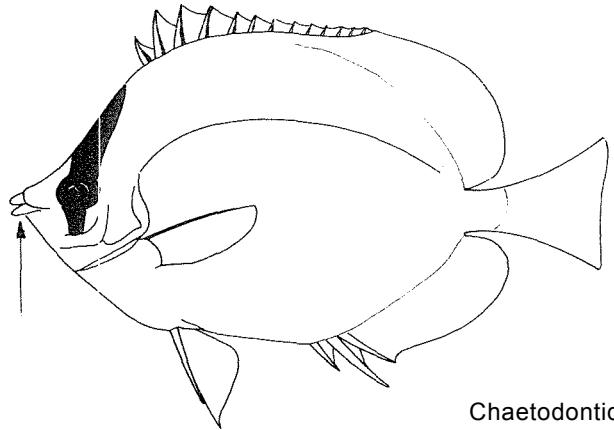


SIMILAR FAMILIES OCCURRING IN THE AREA:

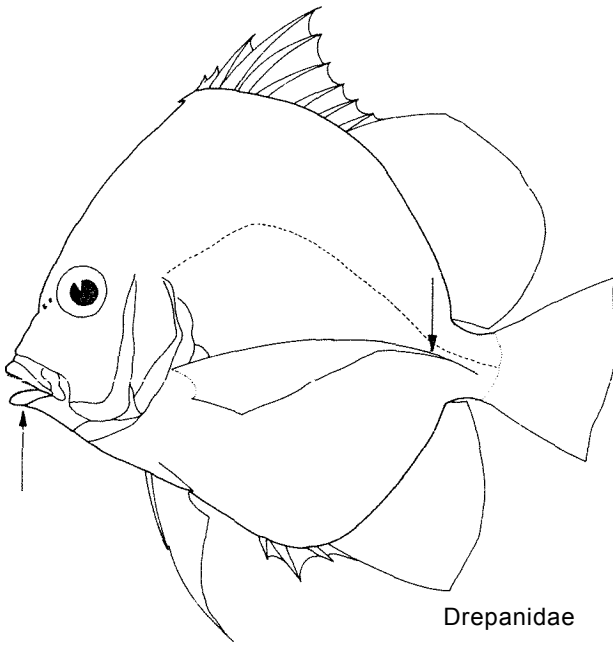
Chaetodontidae: dorsal fin not deeply notched, mouth protrusible; 3 to 5 anal spines (usually 3).

Pomacanthidae: dorsal fin not deeply notched, mouth protrusible; 3 anal spines, preopercle armed with a long spine.

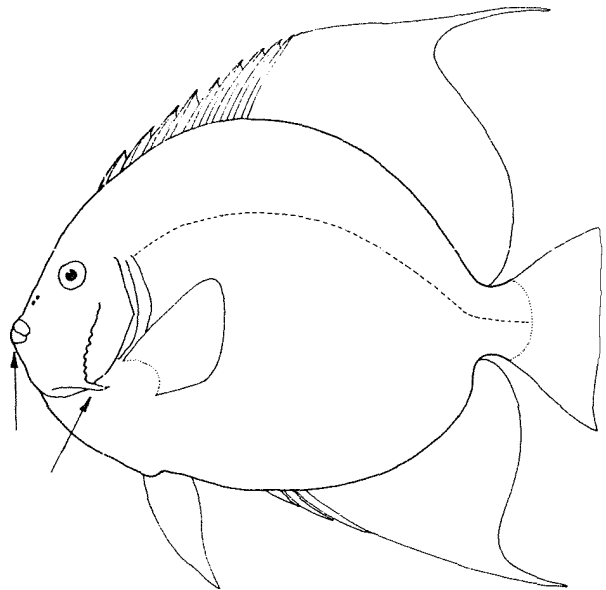
Drepanidae: mouth protrusible; 3 anal spines, pectoral fins elongate.



Chaetodontidae



Drepanidae



Pomacanthidae

KEY TO GENERA OCCURRING IN THE AREA:

Scatophagus only.

LIST OF SPECIES OCCURRING IN THE AREA:

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

Scatophagus argus (Bloch, 1788)

SCAT Scat 1

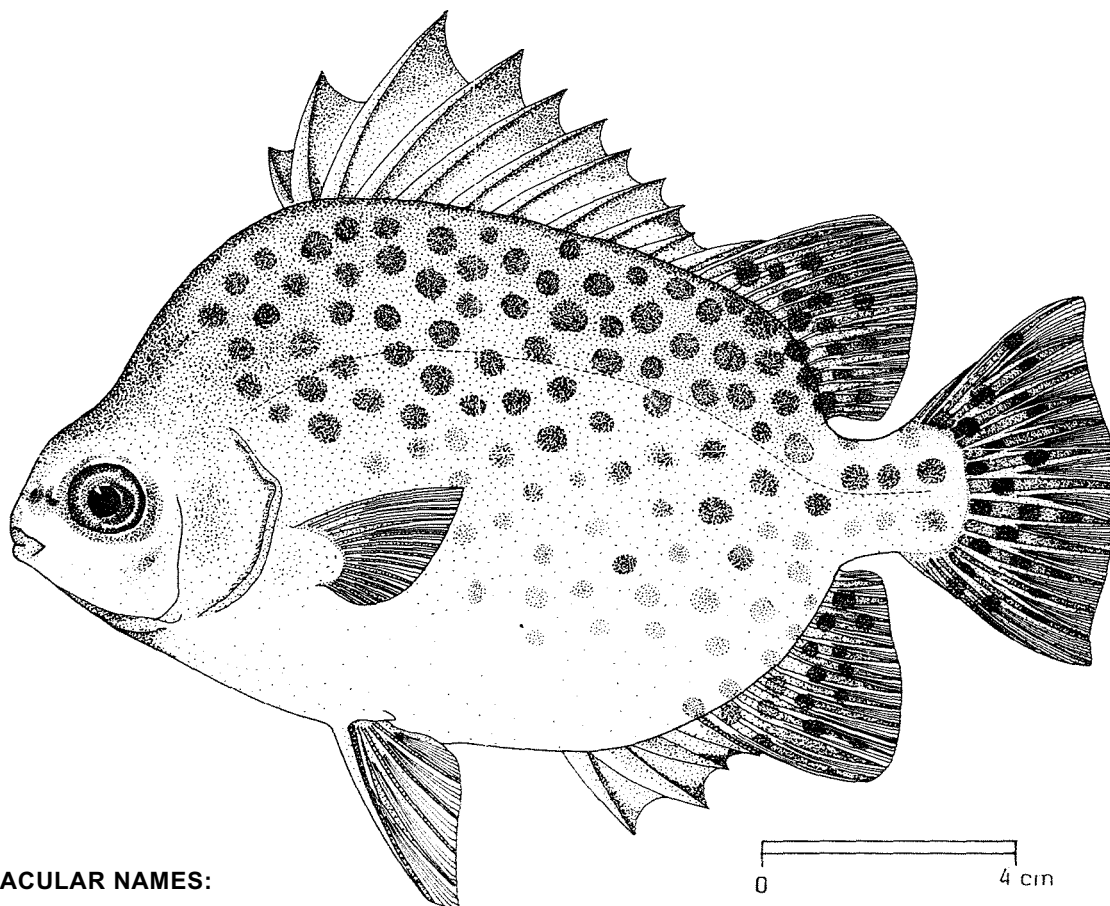
Scatophagus tetracanthus (Lacepède, 1801)

FAO SPECIES IDENTIFICATION SHEETS

FAMILY: SCATOPHAGIDAE

FISHING AREA 51
(W. Indian Ocean)*Scatophagus argus* (Bloch, 1788)

OTHER SCIENTIFIC NAMES STILL IN USE: None



VERNACULAR NAMES:

FAO : En - Spotted scat
 Fr - Pavillon tacheté
 Sp - Pingo manchado

NATIONAL:

DISTINCTIVE CHARACTERS:

Body quadrangular, strongly compressed. Forehead steep, mouth small, with brush-like teeth. Dorsal fin with 11 spines, the membranes deeply incised between spines; middle of dorsal fin with a deep notch.

Colour: greenish to silvery with numerous dark spots mainly confined to upper portion of sides; no bars present in adults.

DISTINGUISHING CHARACTERS OF SIMILAR :SPECIES OCCURRING IN THE AREA:

Scatophagus tetracanthus (East Africa to India and in the Indo-Pacific): body with vertical crossbars instead of blotches.

Species of Chaetodontidae, Pomacanthidae and Drepanidae: dorsal fin unnotched; mouth protrusible. Furthermore, only 3 anal fin spines in Drepanidae and Pomacanthidae.

SIZE :

Maximum: 30 cm; common to 20 cm.

GEOGRAPHICAL DISTRIBUTION AND BEHAVIOUR :

Within the area, known only from India and Sri Lanka; also ranges eastward to Australia, the New Hebrides and Solomon Islands, and northward to southern China and Taiwan.

An inhabitant of harbours, natural embayments, brackish estuaries, and the lower reaches of freshwater streams, frequently occurring among mangroves.

Feeds on bottom detritus and small benthic invertebrates; usually found in small to large schools.

PRESENT FISHING GROUNDS:

Harbours and mangrove estuaries, throughout the year.

CATCHES, FISHING GEAR AND FORMS OF UTILIZATION:

Separate statistics are not reported for this species.

Caught mainly with traps and gillnets.

Marketed mainly fresh or salted.

