

FAO SPECIES IDENTIFICATION SHEETS

FISHING AREA 51
(W. Indian Ocean)

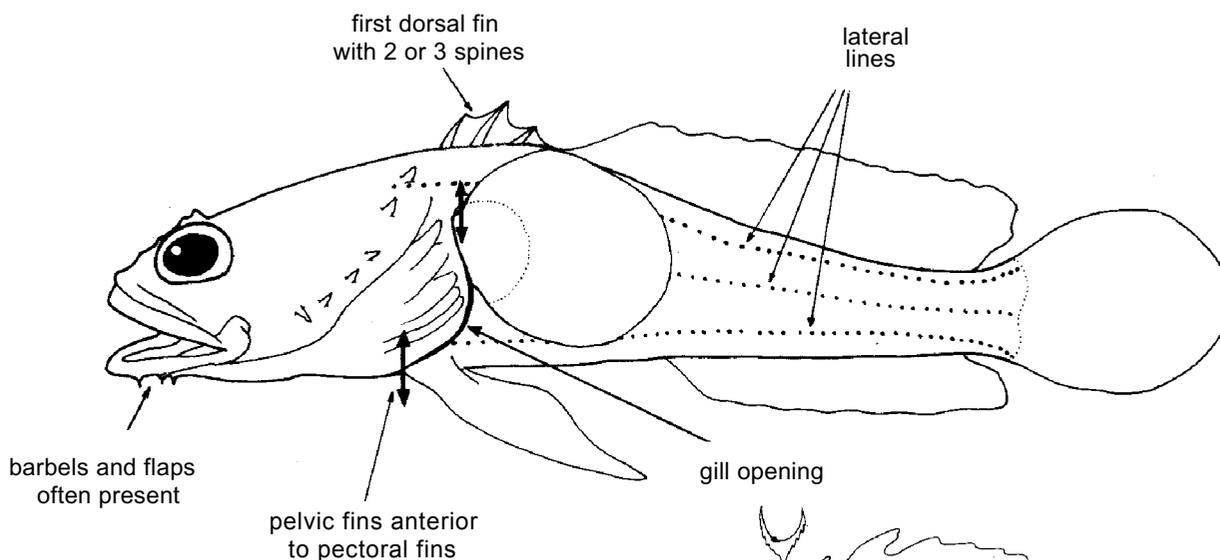
BATRACHOIDIDAE

Toadfishes

Small to medium sized fishes. Body cylindrical, compressed posteriorly; head usually depressed. (Mouth moderate to large, jaws equal or the lower projecting; gill opening on or encompassing pectoral fin base; gill cover armed with 3 or 4 strong spines, usually hidden below skin; small to moderate conical, acute teeth present in both jaws and a curved tooth band on palate. First dorsal fin with 3 strong spines usually hidden in thick skin, located just behind head; second dorsal and anal fins long-based; pectoral and caudal fins rounded; pelvic fins jugular. Skin smooth or with ridges, scaleless and loosely attached to head, body and fins; fleshy tentacles usually present on gill covers, around mouth and above eye. Three lateral line along side of body represented by series of small bifid tentacles. A pore or pocket may be present in upper portion of pectoral axilla.

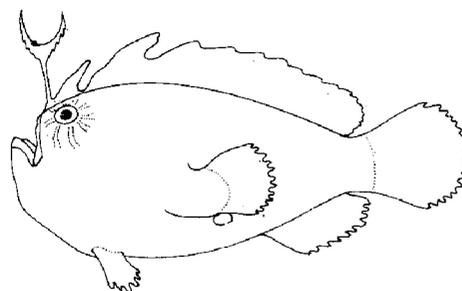
Colour: pale brown or green with darker blotches and mottlings forming crossbars on body and fins.

Toadfishes are bottom-dwellers, ranging from littoral areas to rather deep waters. They often hide in the sediment or in rock crevices. Although none of the species occurring in Fishing Area 51 are presently of commercial importance, they are in local artisanal or trawl fisheries and are used as food or in the production of fishmeal and oil. The spines may inflict wounds to people handling these fishes.



SIMILAR FAMILIES OCCURRING IN THE AREA:

Antennariidae: arm of pectoral fin with an elbow-like bend.

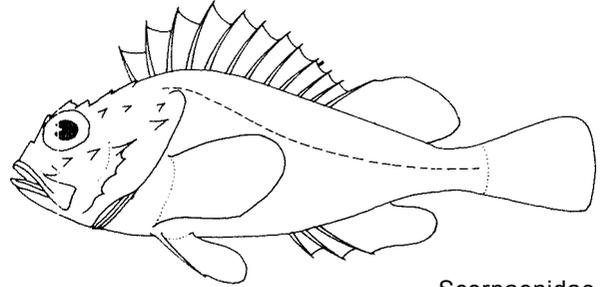


Antennariidae

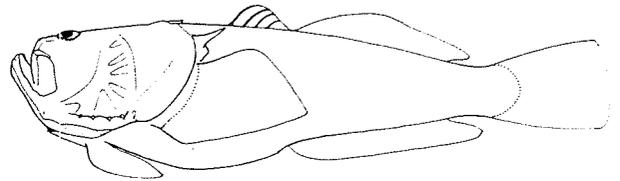
Scorpaenidae: usually 8 to 16 spines in dorsal fin.

Uranoscopidae: head encased in bony armour; eyes on dorsal surface of head.

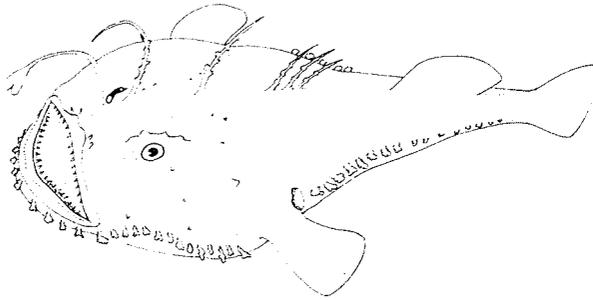
Lophiidae: body and head more strongly depressed; first dorsal fin spine anterior to eyes.



Scorpaenidae



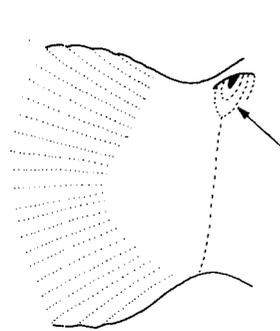
Uranoscopidae



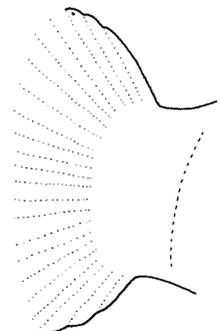
Lophiidae

KEY TO GENERA OCCURRING IN THE AREA:

- 1a. Pocket present in upper portion of pectoral axilla (Fig.1) Austrobatrachus
- 1b. No pocket in pectoral axilla (Fig.2) Batrachthys



Austrobatrachus



Batrachthys

Fig.1 Fig.2
left pectoral fin
folded forward

LIST OF SPECIES OCCURRING IN THE AREA:

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

Austrobatrachus dussumieri (Valenciennes, 1837)

BATRACH Aus 1

Batrachthys grunniens

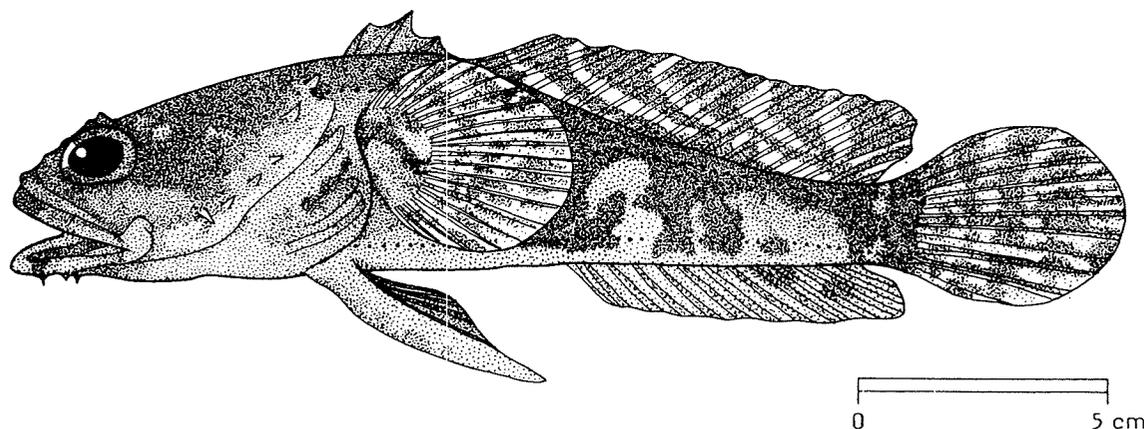
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FAO SPECIES IDENTIFICATION SHEETS

FAMILY: BATRACHOIDIDAE

FISHING AREA 51
(W. Indian Ocean)Austrobatrachus dussumieri (Valenciennes, 1837)

OTHER SCIENTIFIC NAMES STILL IN USE: None



VERNACULAR NAMES:

FAO : En - Flat toadfish
 Fr - Crapaud pipa
 Sp - Sapo chato

NATIONAL:

DISTINCTIVE CHARACTERS:

Head and anterior part of body depressed. Gill opening a relatively large oblique slit, commencing just above pectoral fin base and ending below and anterior to it; 3 or 4 spines on gill cover; small conical teeth in both jaws and on palate. A moderate-sized pocket in upper portion of pectoral axilla. Dorsal fin with 3 spines and 20 to 22 soft rays; anal fin with 16 or 17 soft rays; 43 to 53 pores in uppermost lateral line.

Colour: pale brown with darker mottlings tending to form irregular crossbars on body; body bars continued onto second dorsal and anal fins, sloping obliquely forward on former; pectoral and caudal fins pale brown with darker crossbars.

DISTINGUISHING CHARACTERS OF SIMILAR SPECIES OCCURRING IN THE AREA:

Batrachthys gunniens: no pectoral axillary pocket.

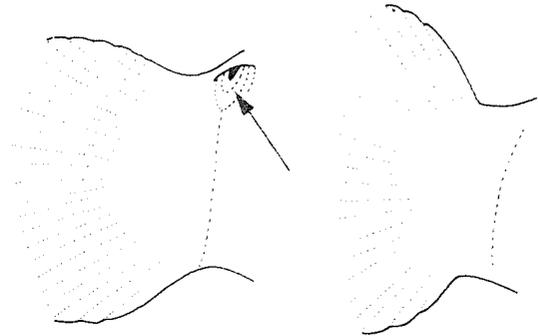
SIZE:

Maximum: 27 cm; common to 20 cm.

GEOGRAPHICAL DISTRIBUTION AND BEHAVIOUR:

Within the area, found in the "Gulf" and along the coasts of Pakistan, India and Sri Lanka.

Prefers muddy bottoms.



Batrachthys gunniens

PRESENT FISHING GROUNDS:

Taken incidentally throughout its range.

CATCHES, FISHING GEAR AND FORMS OF UTILIZATION:

Separate statistics are not reported for this species.

Caught by handlines and bottom trawls.

Marketed mostly fresh.

left pectoral fin folded forward

