



## FAO SPECIES IDENTIFICATION SHEETS

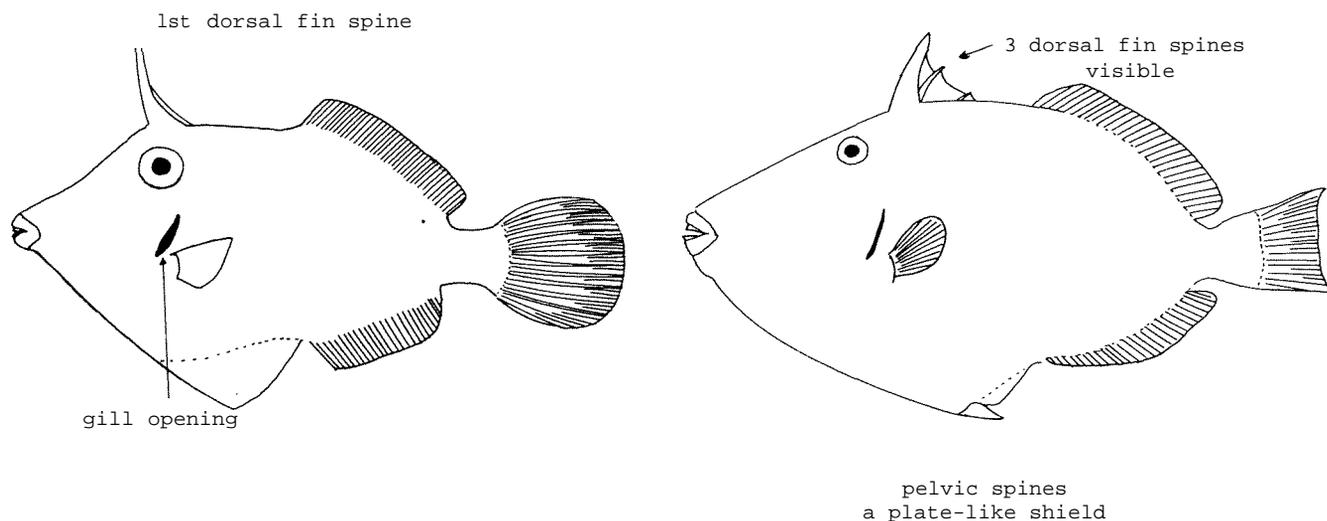
FISHING AREAS 57,71  
(E Ind. Ocean)  
(W Cent. Pacific)

## BALISTIDAE

Filefishes, triggerfishes, leatherjackets  
(including Aluteridae and Monacanthidae of authors)

Small or medium-sized fishes, usually less than 40 cm in length, with usually deep, compressed bodies encased in a tough armour of minute to moderate rough scales. Mouth small, terminal, teeth not fused together. First (spinous) dorsal fin reduced to 1 to 3 spines, the first often capable of being locked by the second. Pelvic fins absent or fused into a single rudimentary spine or shield-like plate. Gill opening a small slit in front of pectoral fin base.

Colour: very variable, often with strikingly marked and vivid patterns.



## SIMILAR FAMILIES OCCURRING IN THE AREA:

Triodontidae, Tetraodontidae, Diodontidae, Molidae: have jaw teeth fused together into a single or pair of beak-like plates.

Triacanthodidae, Triacanthidae: pelvic fins always present (a long spine, sometimes with a soft ray).

Ostraciodontidae: body encased in a box-like armour and no spinous dorsal fin.

Key to Genera

1 a. No fleshy barbel on lower jaw.

2 a. Scales small or moderate but in regular rows; all soft fin rays branched (subfamily Balistinae)

3 a. Caudal peduncle deeper than wide (compressed) ..... *Balistes* (including the genera *Metichthys*, *Balistoides*, *Sufflamen*, *Odonus* and *Canthidermis* - revision needed)

3 b. Caudal peduncle round in cross-section ..... *Abalistes*

2 b. Scales small or minute, not in regular rows; all soft fin rays unbranched (subfamily Monacanthinae)

4 a. First dorsal fin spine erectile, locked by second spine (Fig. 1)

5 a. Plate-like pelvic fin spine present; anal fin with less than 40 fin rays

6 a. Mouth terminal, snout not elongated (Fig. 2) ..... *Monacanthus*

6 b. Mouth dorsal, snout elongated (Fig. 3) *Oxymonacanthus*

5 b. Bony pelvic plate or spine absent or nearly so; anal fin with more than 40 fin rays

7 a. Dorsal fin spine over eye centre (Fig. 4) *Alutera*

7 b. Dorsal fin spine on snout, in front of eye (Fig. 5) *Pseudaluteres*

4 b. First dorsal fin spine not erectile; strong curved spines on caudal peduncle (Fig. 6) *Paratutarius*

1 b. Barbel on chin, snout pointed, mouth dorsal (Fig. 7); dorsal fin spine very feeble .... *Psilocephalus*

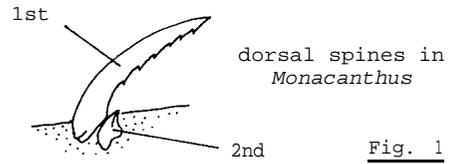


Fig. 1

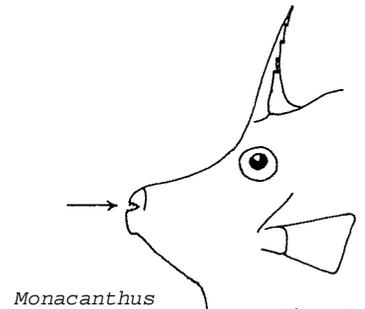


Fig. 2

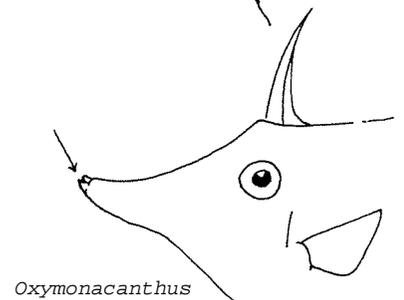


Fig. 3

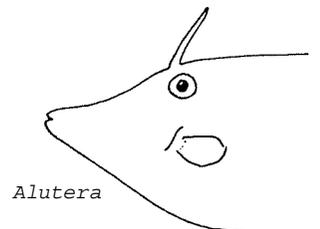


Fig. 4

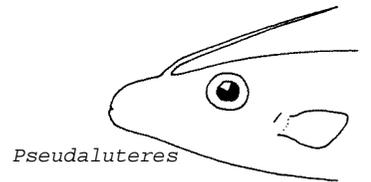


Fig. 5

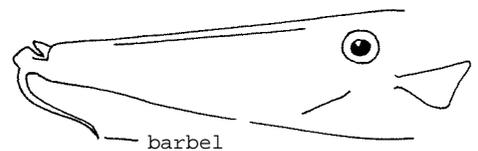
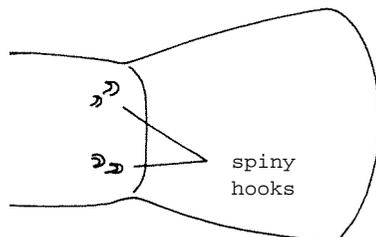


Fig. 6



*Psilocephalus*

Fig. 7

*Paratutarius*

List of Species occurring in the Area  
(Code numbers are given for those species  
for which Identification Sheets are included)

<i>Abalistes stellaris</i>	BALI Abal 1	<i>Monacanthus chinensis</i>
		<i>Monacanthus cheirocephalus</i>
		<i>Monacanthus cryptodon</i>
<i>Alutera monoceros</i>	BALI Alut 1	<i>Monacanthus curtiorhynchus</i>
<i>Alutera scripta</i>		<i>Monacanthus hajam</i>
		<i>Monacanthus macrurus</i>
		<i>Monacanthus melanocephalus</i>
<i>Balistes aculeatus</i>		<i>Monacanthus nematophorus</i>
<i>Balistes brevissimus</i>		<i>Monacanthus nemurus</i>
<i>Balistes bursa</i>		<i>Monacanthus nigrolineatus</i>
<i>Balistes capistratus</i>		<i>Monacanthus nitens</i>
<i>Balistes chrysopterus</i>		<i>Monacanthus sandwichiensis</i>
<i>Balistes conspicillum</i>		<i>Monacanthus scopas</i>
<i>Balistes erythron</i>		<i>Monacanthus septemclassiensis</i>
<i>Balistes flavimarginatus</i>		<i>Monacanthus spinosissimus</i>
<i>Balistes fraenatus</i>		<i>Monacanthus sulcatus</i>
<i>Balistes fuscus</i>		<i>Monacanthus tormentosus</i>
<i>Balistes garnoti</i>		
<i>Balistes jacksonianus</i>		
<i>Balistes radula</i>		<i>Oxymonacanthus longirostris</i>
<i>Balistes rectangulus</i>		
<i>Balistes rotundatus</i>		
<i>Balistes ringens</i>		<i>Pseudatuteres nasicornis</i>
<i>Balistes undulatus</i>		
<i>Balistes verrucosa</i>		
<i>Balistes vetula</i>		<i>Paralutarius prionurus</i>
<i>Balistes vidua</i>		
<i>Balistes viridescens</i>		
<i>Balistes wittensis</i>		<i>Psilocephalus barbatus</i>

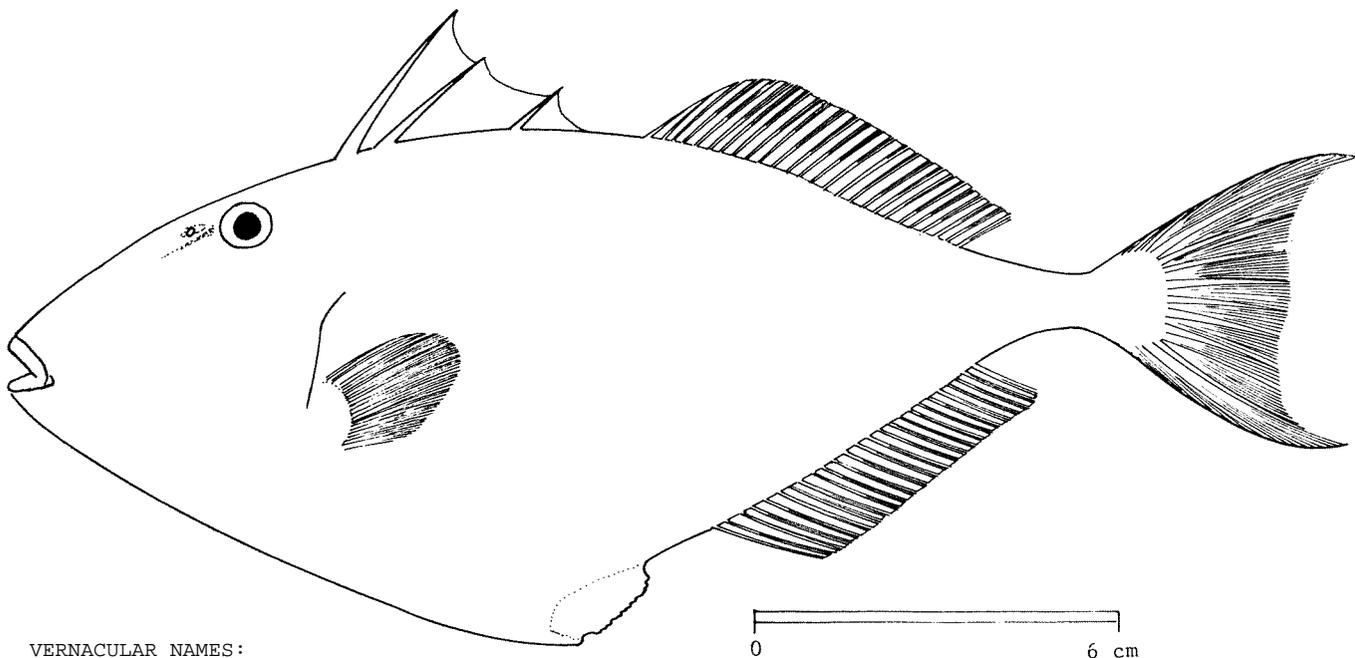
FAO SPECIES IDENTIFICATION SHEETS

FAMILY: BALISTIDAE

FISHING AREAS 57,71  
(E Ind. Ocean)  
(W Cent. Pacific)

*Abalistes stellaris* (Bloch & Schneider, 1801)

FAMILY: *Balistes stellatus* Günther, 1868



VERNACULAR NAMES:

- FAO: En - Starry triggerfish
- Fr -
- Sp -

NATIONAL:

DISTINCTIVE CHARACTERS:

Body deep and compressed, with leathery armour of scales in regular rows. A small groove in front of eye; cheek covered with scales and some enlarged scales behind gill opening. Mouth small, teeth not fused to form a beak. First dorsal fin with 3 stout spines, the first being locked erect by the second; soft dorsal and anal fin rays branched; upper and lower lobes of caudal fin filamentous in large adults; caudal peduncle almost round in cross-section (sometimes depressed, its width greater than its depth).

Colour: grey dashed with olive green; three large white blotches on back and numerous small blue spots; belly white; 3 to 4 yellow lines from mouth to pectoral fin base. Pectoral fins yellow with a dark base; other fins banded with black, yellow and olive.

DISTINGUISHING CHARACTERS OF SIMILAR SPECIES OCCURRING IN THE AREA:

*Balistes* species (*sensu lato*): caudal peduncle laterally compressed (oval in cross-section; almost round or wider than deep in *B. stellaris*).

Other balistid species: scales irregularly placed on body and soft fin rays not branched; also, a chin barbel present in *Psilocephalus*.

SIZE:

Maximum: 60 cm; common: 30 to 40 cm.

GEOGRAPHICAL DISTRIBUTION AND BEHAVIOUR:

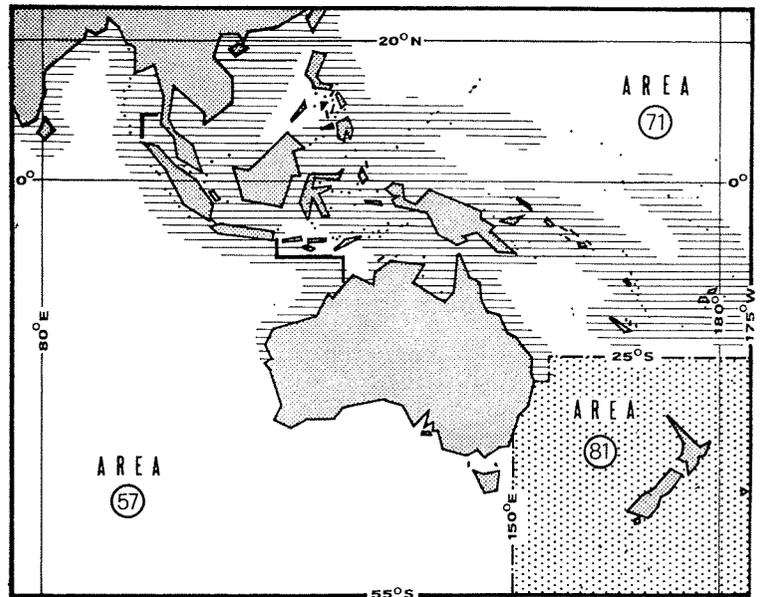
Throughout northern part of area and southward to northern coasts of Australia; also, westward to East Africa and northward to Japan.

Shallow waters down to 90 m.

Feeds on bottom fauna.

PRESENT FISHING GROUNDS:

Throughout its range.



CATCHES, MAIN FISHING GEAR AND PRINCIPAL FORMS OF UTILIZATION:

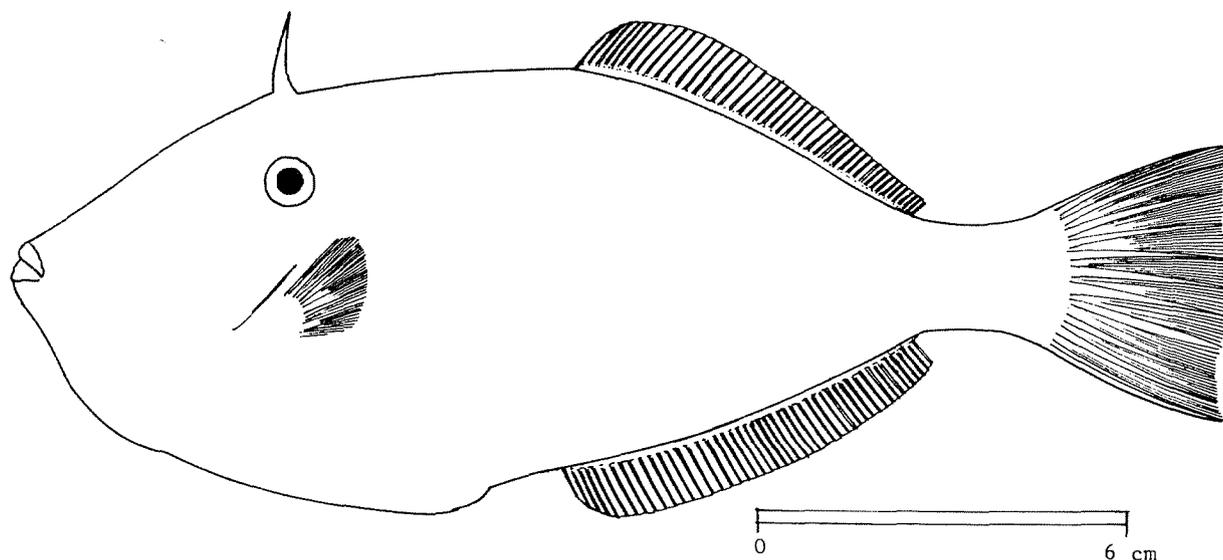
Separate statistics are not reported for this species.

Caught mainly with bottom trawls.

Marketed fresh; flesh resembles chicken.

## FAO SPECIES IDENTIFICATION SHEETS

FAMILY: BALISTIDAE

FISHING AREAS 57,71  
(E Ind. Ocean)  
(W Cent. Pacific)*Alutera monoceros* (Linnaeus, 1758)SYNONYMS STILL IN USE: *Aluteres monoceros*: misspelling

## VERNACULAR NAMES:

FAO: En - Unicorn filefish  
Fr -  
Sp -

## NATIONAL:

## DISTINCTIVE CHARACTERS:

Body deep and compressed, with leathery armour of small irregular scales. Mouth small, teeth not fused into a beak. First dorsal fin above eye centre, a single spine visible., the second spine (minute) hidden; soft dorsal and anal fin rays not branched, 46 to 50 and 47 to 52 fin rays respectively; pelvic fins merely a flap of skin, but no bony plate or shield; caudal fin much shorter than snout.

Colour: uniform light grey, with scattering of dark brown dots on back; fins yellow.

DISTINGUISHING CHARACTERS OF SIMILAR SPECIES OCCURRING IN THE AREA:

*Alutera scripta*: caudal fin longer (longer than snout; shorter than snout in *A. moroceros*).

*Balistes (sensu lato)* and *Abalistes* species: regular scale rows on body and a second dorsal fin spine evident.

Other balistid species: fewer dorsal and anal fin rays (46 to 50 and 47 to 52 in *A. monoceros*).

SIZE:

Maximum: 50 cm; common: 30 to 40 cm.

GEOGRAPHICAL DISTRIBUTION AND BEHAVIOUR:

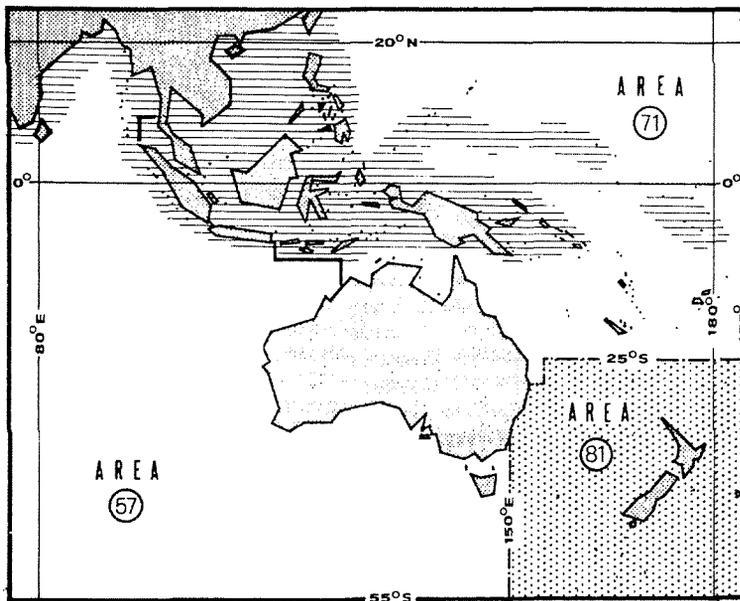
Throughout northern part of area, but not to Australian coasts; also, westward to East Africa and northward to South China Sea.

Coastal waters down to 50 m.

Feeds on small animals.

PRESENT FISHING GROUNDS:

Coastal waters.



CATCHES, MAIN FISHING GEAR AND PRINCIPAL FORMS OF UTILIZATION:

Separate statistics are not reported for this species.

Caught mainly with trap nets and bottom trawls.

Marketed fresh; highly valued as food.