

**THE STINGRAY TAENIUURA MELANOSPILOS, A NEW RECORD
FROM THE ARAB GULF**

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One male stingray, **Taeniura melanospilos** Bleeker, was captured by hook and line on 23 October, 1975 in the northern sector of the Arab Gulf, within the territorial waters of Iraq (29°38'N. 48°50' 10"E.) at a depth of 80 feet. The ray was preserved in the Natural History Museum, University of Basrah.

Distinctive characters

Taeniura meyeri Muller and Henle **T. lymma** (Forsskal) are the only rays of the Arabian Sea which is likely to enter the Arab Gulf and with which **T. melanospilos** might be confused. **T. melanospilos** can be distinguished from **T. meyeri** by the curved mouth and the presence of two to three oral papillae, while **T. lymma** has a rather straight mouth and five oral papillae. In the case of **T. lymma**, the length of the disc is greater than the breadth and has dark edged bluish spots on the dorsal side, while in **T. melanospilos** the disc breadth is greater than the disc length and has black spots.

Description

Total length, 1270 mm; disc length, 620 mm; disc breadth, 745 mm; tail length, 700 mm; body length before the anus, 570 mm; eye diameter, 20 mm; spiracle diameter, 25 mm; distance between orbits, 135 mm; preorbital distance, 110 mm; preoral length, 120 mm; breadth of mouth 65 mm; length of gill openings : 1st, 23 mm; 2nd, 28 mm; 3rd, 26 mm; 4th, 25 mm; 5th, 15 mm; length of tail spines: upper, 150 mm; lower, 80 mm. Disc broader than long; mouth curved, with three

papillae, its roof with finely undulated curtain. Teeth tessellate, grooved transversely, 10 rows on upper jaw and 13 rows on lower. The subcaudal fin extending from just below the tail spines upto the end of the tail. The tail with two spines, the upper one is laterally serrated and about twice as long as the unserrated lower spine.

Disc is covered with fine asperities and with a dorsal vertebral row of 69 small tubercles. Colour of disc is grey with black spots dorsally and a paler margin in the live specimen. Pelvic fins and anterior part of tail are also spotted. The body on the ventral side is whitish.

T. melanospilos has been reported from Indonesia, India, Ceylon, East Africa, Gulf of Oman and Red Sea (Bleeker 1853; Misra 1969). No species of the genus **Taeniura** was reported from the Arab Gulf. Therefore, the present finding forms the first record for the species as well as the genus for the Arab Gulf.

REFERENCES

- Bleeker, P. 1853. Diagnostische beschrijvingen van nieuw we op weinig bekende vischsoorten van Batavia. Nat. Tijds. Nederl. Ind., Vol.4, p. 513.
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الخلاصة

Taeniura جنس لم يسجل في الخليج العربي • لذلك التحصيل الجديد لـ **Taeniura melanospilos** يمثل التسجيل الجديد لهذا النوع والجنس في الخليج العربي •