

# 19. ON A REPORT OF *PRISTOLEPIS MARGINATUS* JERDON (PERCIFORMES : PERCOIDEI : NANDIDAE) FROM KARNATAKA

The genus *Pristolepis*, belonging to the monotypic subfamily Pristolepidinae, Class Pisces, is restricted to a small area of peninsular India, Sri Lanka, Southeast Asia, and part of the Malay Archipelago (Nelson 1994). The type species *marginatus* Jerdon (1848) was described from the rivers of Mannantoddy in North Malabar, Kerala. Two species described subsequently from Travancore, namely *tetracanthus* Günther, 1862 and *malabaricus* Günther, 1854 and a subspecies from Wynaad, *malabaricus malabaricus* Silas, are all considered synonyms of *marginatus* (Talwar 1991, Menon in press). The only other species of this genus reported from India is *fasciatus* Bleeker, originally collected from the rivers of Borneo and is more widely distributed as follows: India: Kerala: Vembanad Lake; Myanmar, Thailand, Malay Peninsula, Sumatra, Borneo and Java. Menon (op. cit.) remarks that the occurrence of this species in Kerala needs confirmation.

*Pristolepis marginatus* was, until recently (Yadav, 1996), considered endemic to the Kerala part of the Western Ghats. It has since been collected from the Indira Gandhi Wildlife Sanctuary, Anamalai Hills, Tamil Nadu. Biju *et al.* (1999) reported its occurrence in the adjoining Parambikulam Reserve Forest in Kerala. During a faunistic survey of Karnataka, districts Dakshin Kannada, Kodagu and Biligiri Rangaswamy Wildlife Sanctuary, by a team from the Zoological Survey of India, 11 specimens varying in length from 41 to 91 mm SL were collected from altitudes ranging from 90 to 670 m.

**Material collected:** 1 ex. 41 mm SL, Regn

No. F. 6052, 28.xi.1998, 640 m above msl, Haringi; 1 ex. 71 mm, F. 6072, 8.xii.1998, 670 m above msl, Gundiya; 1 ex. 18 mm, 11.iv.1999, 90 m above msl, Anjeri (Kollur); 5 exs 85 mm, F. 6106, 12.iv.1999, Bavanagare; 3 exs, 43 mm, F. 6116, 13.iv.1999, 90 m, Sowbarnika river. (All specimens bear three anal spines).

This is the first report of the species from the hill ranges of Karnataka. Its known northern limit is the Krishna drainage of Western Ghats (Yadav, op. cit.). There is a possibility of it being present in other waterbodies along the Western Ghats. The occurrence of this genus with Malayan affinities in different areas of the Western Ghats is of ichthyological significance (Hora 1944, Menon 1973).

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K. REMA DEVI  
T.J. INDRA  
M.S. RAVICHANDRAN  
M.B. RAGHUNATHAN  
Zoological Survey of India,  
Southern Regional Station,  
100, Santhome High Road,  
Chennai 600 028,  
Tamil Nadu, India.

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## 20. ON A REPORT OF *TETRAODON (MONOTRETUS) TRAVANCORICUS*, FROM SOUTH KANARA, KARNATAKA, INDIA

Two freshwater tetraodontid fishes have been described from India, namely *Tetraodon cutcutia* (Hamilton), found in the fresh waters of Bihar, Orissa, Bengal, and Assam, attaining a length of 9 cm and *Tetraodon (Monotretus) travancoricus* described from Pamba river, Central Travancore by Hora and Nair (1941), hardly attaining a length of 2.5 cm. After more than four decades, these miniature globe fishes were collected and reported from the coastal belts of Kerala, namely the Vembanad Lake, Kottayam by Ahlander (1998). Part of the collections made by him from Kottayam and adjacent districts of Kerala deposited in the Reserve collections of Zoological Survey of India, Southern Regional Station (ZSI, SRS), Chennai, included *T. travancoricus* from three localities, namely Meenachil river, Vembanad lake and from near Kottayam Railway Station (Rema Devi *et al.* 1996). A report on the sexual dimorphism of the species from Pudukkad, Trichur, Kerala was made by Inasu (1993). Occurrence in the Chalakudi, Periyar and Kechery rivers, Kerala was reported by Biju *et al.* (1999). Subsequently it was found further north in Karimpuzha, a tributary of Chaliyar river (north of the Palghat gap) by Lal Mohan (in press). The present record of these tiny tetraodontids far inland, from the waters of the evergreen forests of Western Ghats of South Kanara, is of ichthyological significance.

The collections were made during a survey by ZSI, SRS. The 10 specimens range in length from 10.00-18.5 mm SL, Regn No. F. 5845, from

around Mavincar, Dakshin Kannada, at 50 m above msl, 13.iv.1999, coll. G. Thirumalai.

**Other Material:** 3 exs 14.5-20.00 mm SL, F.1364, Feb-Mar 1988, Shertallai, Kerala, V.C.R.C., Shertallai; 4 exs 15.5-19.5 mm SL, F. 5323, Karimpuzha, 22.i.1997, R.S. Lalmohan; 16 exs F.6005, 17.iv.1990, Vembanad lake, coll. Eric & Suzz.

### DESCRIPTION

D.8(4) or 9(6); P.17(2) or 18(8); A.8(7) or 9(3); C 1/7(3), 8(6), 9(1)/2.

Morphometric characters are presented in Table 1. The proportions of the biometric characters of the specimens from Karnataka fall within the range given in the original description by Hora and Nair, 1941. However, though similar in position, the blotches on the body are smaller and have a restricted spread.

**Remarks:** Recently, a new species *Carinotetraodon imitator* was described from Cochin, Kerala by Britz and Kottelat (1999). The genus *Carinotetraodon* is distinguished from *Tetraodon*, in that the males of the former possess conspicuous mid-dorsal and mid-ventral keels on the skin during courtship, a character supposedly absent in species of *Tetraodon*. *C. imitator* is diagnosed by the presence of numerous, additional, tiny spots interspersed with larger blotches in females (vs. presence of only larger blotches in *Tetraodon*); body spination: a few slender pointed spines (vs. dense coverage); and differences in certain osteological





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