



*London, Published by W. Woodcut, in the Strand, opposite to the Theatre Royal, in the Year 1784.*

THE  
JACULATOR,  
OR  
SHOOTING FISH.



GENERIC CHARACTER.

*Teeth* (generally) setaceous, small, and very numerous.

*Body* commonly fasciated transversely. Dorsal and anal *Fins* fleshy and scaly toward the base.

SPECIFIC CHARACTER.

WHITISH CHÆTODON, with nine spines and an ocellated spot on the dorsal fin, and a lengthened subcylindric snout.

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The fish here represented in its natural size, is a native of India, where it inhabits rivers, especially where the water, from its nearness to the sea, is a little brackish. It is remarkable for the very extraordinary manner in which it takes its prey. It principally feeds on flies and other insects which hover over the waters. When it observes one of these in its passage, it shoots against it from its tubular snout a drop of water, with so much force, and with so sure an aim as generally to lay it dead on the surface. In the same manner it shoots

shoots at such insects as happen to be sitting on the tops of plants and other projecting objects near the banks. In shooting at a fitting insect it commonly approaches to the distance of from six to four feet before it explodes the water.

When kept in a state of confinement in a large basin of water, these fish afford a high entertainment, by their dexterity in this exercise. If a fly or other insect be fastened on the edge of the vessel, the fish instantly perceive it, and, as if contending for the prize, continue to shoot at it, with such admirable skill as scarce ever to miss their mark.

The color of this fish is whitish, or very pale brown, with (commonly) four or five blackish fasciæ running across the body. The eyes are very large. On the lower part of the dorsal fin is a very remarkable large black ocellated spot, surrounded by a circle of a lighter color. The snout is finely calculated for the power of exploding water from it. The trivial name of *Rostratus*, which LINNÆUS applied to this fish, being not sufficiently distinctive of the species, but applying with perhaps equal propriety to some others of the genus, I have presumed to substitute that of *Enceladus*.

I think it necessary to observe that it is not improbable that the faculty of darting or shooting water from the snout may not be absolutely peculiar to the fish above-described, but may perhaps take place in two or three other species.



Shaw, George. 1791. "The Jaculator or Shooting Fish, *Chaetodon enceladus* [Pl. 67]." *The Naturalist's Miscellany* 2(XXII), <https://doi.org/10.5962/p.310718>.

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