

Short communication**Two species of angelfish (Pomacanthidae) new to Sri Lanka**ARJAN RAJASURIYA*¹ AND NISHAN PERERA²¹ National Aquatic Resources Research and Development Agency.² World Conservation Union/IUCN, Sri Lanka Country Office.

*Corresponding author (E mail: arjan@nara.ac.lk)

Two species of angelfish, namely *Apolemichthys trimaculatus* and *Centropyge flavicauda*, that have not been previously recorded in Sri Lanka are reported from reef environments in the southern and northwestern regions. Previously, nine species of angelfish belonging to four genera have been listed in Sri Lanka. Among the large angelfishes, *Pomacanthus annularis*, *P. semicirculatus*, and *P. imperator* are common, whilst *Pygoplites diacanthus* is extremely rare, *Apolemichthys xanthurus* is a medium sized angelfish commonly found in Sri Lanka. Four species of pygmy angelfish are also recorded, namely *Centropyge multispinis*, *C. flavipectoralis*, *C. eibli* and *C. bispinosus*, of which the latter is considered to be extremely rare.

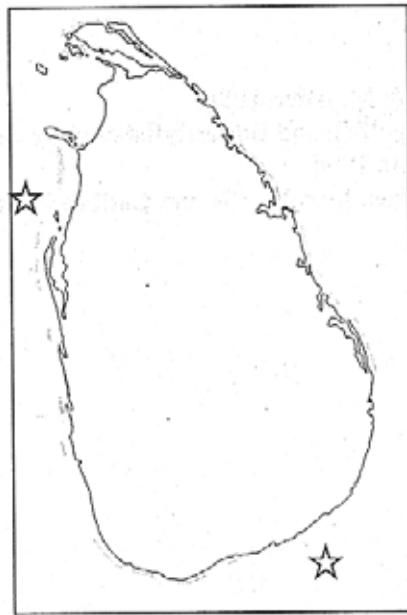


Figure 1. Map of Sri Lanka indicating two sites where two species of angelfish were observed.

A single adult specimen of *Apolemichthys trimaculatus*, which was about 12 cm in length, was sighted at the Great Basses reef, southeast Sri Lanka in April 2000. No other sightings of this species have been reported since. This species is known to occur along seaward margins of coral reefs at depths of 3 - 40 m (Lieske and Myers 1994), and prefers steep reef slopes such as in the Maldives, where it is relatively common. At the Great Basses reef, it was seen about 200 m ($6^{\circ} 10.025' N$, $81^{\circ} 28.025' E$) west of the lighthouse on a limestone ridge at a depth of 15 m (Fig. 1). Its habitat consists of high vertical relief and is similar to seaward margins of offshore reefs. *A. trimaculatus* is distributed from East Africa throughout the Indo-Australian archipelago to southern Japan and New Caledonia (Allen et al. 1998).

Centropyge flavicauda was sighted in 2004 in the Bar Reef Marine Sanctuary ($8^{\circ} 19.502' N$, $79^{\circ} 41.464' E$) at a depth of 17.5 m (Fig. 1) where adults, which were about 5 cm in length were found in small groups of 3 to 4 individuals. Its habitat comprises of coral rubble and low growing corals along outer reef slopes at depths of 10 to 60 m (Allen et al., 1998). In Sri Lanka, it is found among a bank of corals (*Stylopora pistillata*) with low vertical relief on an outer reef habitat of the Bar Reef Marine Sanctuary, northwest Sri Lanka. Seawards of this location is a relatively sharp slope leading to depths greater than 100 m. It is distributed throughout the Indo-West and Central Pacific. The northern and southern latitudes extend from southern Japan to the Great Barrier Reef (Allen et al., 1998).

References

- Allen, G.R., R. Steene & M. Allen 1998.
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