

**NEROCILA PIGMENTATA BAL AND JOSHI (ISOPODA: CYMOTHOIDAE)
PARASITIC ON NEMATALOSA NASUS (BLOCH)**

ABSTRACT

Nerocila pigmentata Bal and Joshi (Isopoda: Cymothoidae) has been reported for the first time from *Nematalosa nasus* (Bloch) a new host at Parangipettai, east coast of India.

VERY little is known about the isopod parasites of Indian fishes. Species belonging to the Genus *Nerocila* (Isopoda : Cymothoidae) are generally found as external parasites on fishes. Barnard (1936) examining the isopod collections of *R.I.M.S. Investigator*, described *N. phaeopleura* Blkr, from the sailfish *Histiophorus gladius* (Broussonet), *N. serra* Sch. Mein. from *Arius sagar* (Ham-Buch.) and *N. sundaica* Blkr. from an

unknown host. Chidambaram and Menon (1945) observed the common occurrence of *N. sundaica* in a few of the important species of food fishes of the west coast of India during December, January and February. Bal and Joshi (1959) described a new species, *N. pigmentata* on *Opisthopterus tardoore* (Cuv.) which Meenakshisundaram (1965) and Seshagiri Rao (1975) reported on the host specificity of *Nerocila* sp.

on *Ilisha melastoma* (Schn.) and (*I. indica*) respectively from Bombay on the west coast of India and from Visakhapatnam and Kakinada on the east coast. Recently Jayadev Babu and Sanjeeva Raj (1980) described a new species, *N. pulicatensis* on *Mystus gulio* (Ham-Buch.) and *N. trivitatta* on *Arius nenga* (Blkr.).

During the course of a study on *Nematalosa nasus* (Bloch), cymothoid parasites were commonly found inside the opercular chamber. In two specimens, the head was broadly round in front and prominently produced to the posterior angles of the posterior segments. The coxal plates on all segments were prominent. These characters indicated that they belonged to the genus *Nerocila*. These two specimens resembled *N. pigmentata* Bal and Joshi in possessing long acute arrow-like epimeral expansions of the posterior segments of the thorax, in having a broadly rounded telson, in the presence of beautiful dark violet bands on the sides of the body and in possessing along slender uropodal region (Fig. 1). Bal and Joshi described *N. pigmentata* as a new species based on two specimens from *Opisthopterus tardoore* (Cuv.) from Bombay. It is interesting to note here that in the present instance two specimens were found on *N. nasus* a new host at Parangipettai on the

east coast of India. Both the species were female measuring 16 mm and 20 mm in total

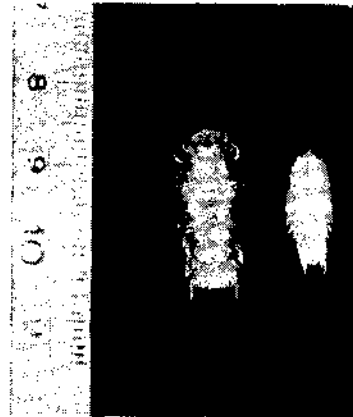


Fig. 1. *Nerocila pigmentata* Bal and Joshi.

length and occurred in female *N. nasus* measuring 239 mm and 202 mm in total length. They were found inside the opercular chamber of the host.

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