

16. Scoliodon : Dogfish

Classification :

Phylum	Chordata	→	Dorsal tubular nerve cord, notochord and gill-slits present.
Group	Cranialia	→	Cranium with brain present.
Subphylum	Vertebrata	→	Vertebral column present.
Division	Gnathostomata	→	Jaws and paired appendages present.
Superclass	Pisces	→	Paired fins, gills and skin with scales.
Class	Chondrichthyes	→	Endoskeleton cartilaginous. Scales usually placoid. Spinal valve is intestine.
	(=Elasmobranchii)	→	Opercula absent.
Sub-class	Selachii	→	Sharks and rays. Gills in separate clefts. Cloaca present.
Order	Pleuronctemata	→	(Pleuron, sides; necton, swimming). Gill-slits lateral, posterior fins small.
	(=Squali)	→	
Family	Scoliodidae	→	Asteromorphidae. First dorsal fin without spine.
Genus	Scoliodon		(Dogfish)

Geographical distribution : *Scoliodon* has wide distribution. About 4 species are found all along the Indian sea coast. Its presence has been reported from Zanzibar, Sri Lanka to Malay Archipelago, East Indies, Philippine Islands, Mexico to Panama, Cuba, West Indies and South America. Lower Carboniferous to Recent.

Habit and habitat : The natural home of *Scoliodon* is the sea, but some live in estuaries and even ascend the rivers. They are **predacious and voracious** feeders attacking their prey with powerful jaws. They are active swimmers.

Comments :

- (1) Commonly called **dogfish** or **dogshark**.
- (2) Spindle-shaped body, about **60 cm long**, is regionated into **head, trunk and tail**.
- (3) Dorsal and lateral sides of body are pigmented dark grey or slaty grey, while the ventral side is white.
- (4) **Head** is dorso-ventrally compressed and flattened into snout. It contains ventrally situated slit-like mouth, obliquely situated nostrils and laterally situated **protuberant eyes**. A little behind eye there are five pairs of lateral **gill-clefts**.
- (5) **Trunk** bears paired fins. A pair of anterior **pectoral fins** and a pair of posterior **pelvic fins**.
- (6) **Heterocercal tail** turned upwards and **caudal fin**.
- (7) A pair of pigmented **lateral lines** extends from head to tail.
- (8) *Scoliodon* exhibits **sexual dimorphism**. Males are easily recognized by having a pair of intromittent organs, called as **claspers**. Cloaca is found between 2 pelvic fins.

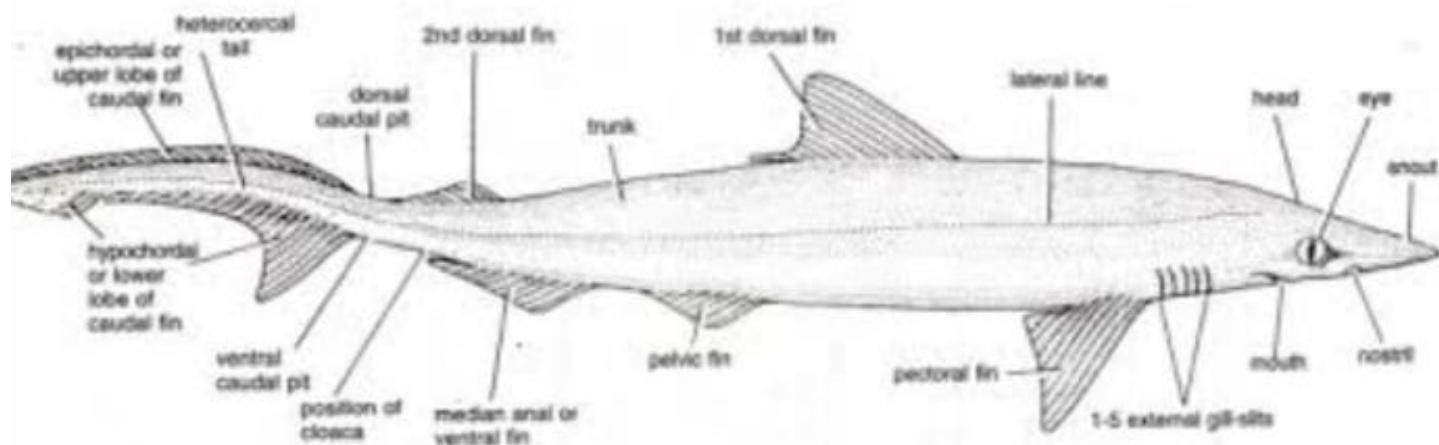


Fig. 16. *Scoliodon*.