

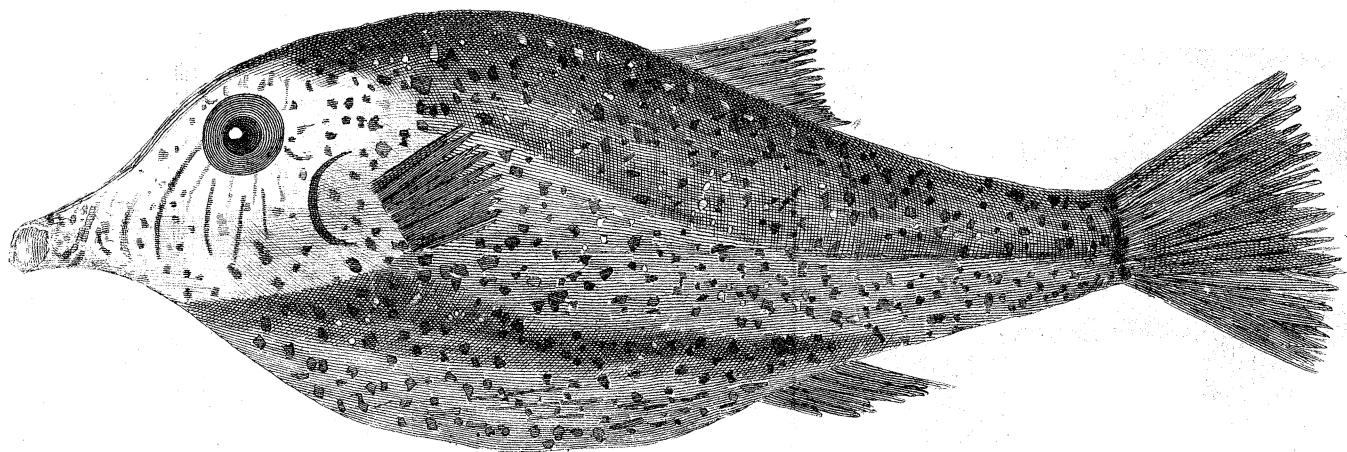
XIX. *An Account of a new Electrical Fish. In a Letter from Lieutenant William Paterfon to Sir Joseph Banks, Bart. P. R. S.*

Read May 11, 1786.

S I R,

WHILE at the island of Johanna, one of the Comora islands, in my way to the East-Indies, with the 98th Regiment, I met with an electrical fish, which has hitherto escaped the observation of naturalists, and seems in many respects to differ from the electrical fishes already described; which induces me to send you the following account of it, with a very imperfect Drawing, and to beg that, if you think it deserves attention, you will do me the honour of presenting it to the Royal Society. The situation of a subaltern officer, in an army upon foreign service, will, I hope, sufficiently apologize for my sending you so very imperfect a sketch of the fish, which was made in the field, in a hot climate, under every disadvantage.

The fish is seven inches long, two inches and a half broad, has a long projecting mouth, and seems to be of the genus Tetrodon. The back of the fish is a dark brown colour, the belly part of sea-green, the sides yellow, and the fins and tail of a sandy green. The body is interspersed with red, green, and white spots, the white ones particularly bright; the eyes large, the iris red, its outer edge tinged with yellow. (See Tab. XIII.)



The island of Johanna is situated in latitude $12^{\circ} 13'$ south. The coast is wholly composed of coral rocks, which are in many places hollowed by the sea. In these cavities I found several of the electrical fishes. The water is about 56° or 60° of heat of FAHRENHEIT's thermometer. I caught two of them in a linen bag, closed up at one end, and open at the other. In attempting to take one of them in my hand, it gave me so severe an electrical shock, that I was obliged to quit my hold. I however secured them both in the linen bag, and carried them to the camp, which was about two miles distant. Upon my arrival there, one of them was found to be dead, and the other in a very weak state, which made me anxious to prove, by the evidence of others, that it possessed the powers of electricity, while it was yet alive. I had it put into a tub of water, and desired the Surgeon of the regiment to lay hold of it between his hands; upon doing which he received an evident electrical stroke. Afterwards the Adjutant touched it with his finger upon the back, and felt a very slight shock, but sufficiently strong to ascertain the fact.

After so very imperfect an account, I will not trouble you with any observations of my own upon this singular fish; but beg you will consider this only as a direction to others who may hereafter visit that island, and from their situation, and knowledge in natural history, may be better able to describe the fish, and give an account of its electrical organs.

I have the honour to be, with great esteem, &c.

W. PATERSON,
Lieutenant 98th regiment.

