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United Nations



# IMPORTANT COASTAL FISHERY SPECIES OF PAKISTAN

A Pocket Guide



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## Important Note

This pocket guide was prepared under the direction of the FAO FishFinder Programme (former Species Identification and Data Programme). Preparation was supported by the FAO UTF/PAK/108/PAK “Fisheries Resources Appraisal in Pakistan” (FRAP) project under the development project “Stock Assessment Survey Programme in EEZ of Pakistan through Chartering of Fisheries Research Vessel and Capacity Building of Marine Fisheries Department, Karachi” and Marine Fisheries Department, Ministry of Ports & Shipping, Government of Pakistan. The 54 species included are a selection of those common in the coastal marine fisheries in the country. It should be noted that there are many more marine species exploited by coastal fisheries in Pakistan that could not be included here.

The format of the pocket guide was developed for use by non-taxonomists and to facilitate communication with practitioners (fishers and marketers). For this purpose, the FishFinder Programme assigns great importance to species local names. Here, the most common local Pakistani name/s of a species used in Sindh (Sin) and Balochistan (Bal) are reported. Users of this pocket guide should be aware that the same local name often applies to several species and that one species may be known by more than one local name (where known to the authors, this is indicated on the cards).

To aid in quick identification, the pocket guide includes a colour-coded grouping of species based on simple morphological characteristics (fins) as well as symbols for maximum sizes, ecological preferences and catch methods.

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## Introduction

Pakistan is located in south Asia, between 23°42' and 36°55'N, and 60°45' and 75°20'W. It has a coastline of about 1 100 kilometres stretching from the border with India on the east to the border with Iran to the south-west and the Arabian Sea to the south (Figure 1). The continental shelf averages 50 270 kilometres in width and is generally wider in the south-eastern portion (Sindh) and narrower in the north-west (Balochistan).

Hydrographically, the waters of the Arabian Sea are influenced by the atmospheric force of reversing monsoons. These result in the strong seasonal variability in its oceanographic conditions (i.e. surface temperature, salinity, oxygen) and position of the thermocline. Ocean upwelling, wind driven mixing and lateral advection processes make this coastal region extremely productive. Overall productivity benefits also from the nutrient-rich waters coming from the Somali upwelling.

The Pakistani fisheries comprise inshore (shrimp trawls, surrounding nets, gill-nets) as well as offshore (pelagic gill-nets, long-lines) components, while deep-sea fishery is poorly developed. In Pakistan there are about 800 000 people involved in fisheries, including fish dealers and processors. The fishing vessels range from traditional wooden boats called *Hora* to modern fibreglass shrimp trawlers. Since the year 2000, Pakistan has reported average annual marine catches of just over 372 000 tonnes to FAO.

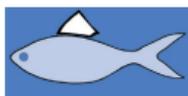


**Figure 1. Map of Pakistan showing its two maritime provinces.**

## Quick Access Keys:

The marine species indicated in this pocket guide have been grouped using easily identifiable morphological characteristics, i.e. the dorsal (and anal) fins. The grouping does not reflect taxonomic classification and is only intended to allow users to quickly find a species. Each group has been colour-coded for easy recognition within the card set.

### Bony Fishes



One short dorsal fin



One long dorsal fin, anal fin shorter than one-third of body length



Two dorsal fins



One long dorsal fin, anal fin at least one-third of body length



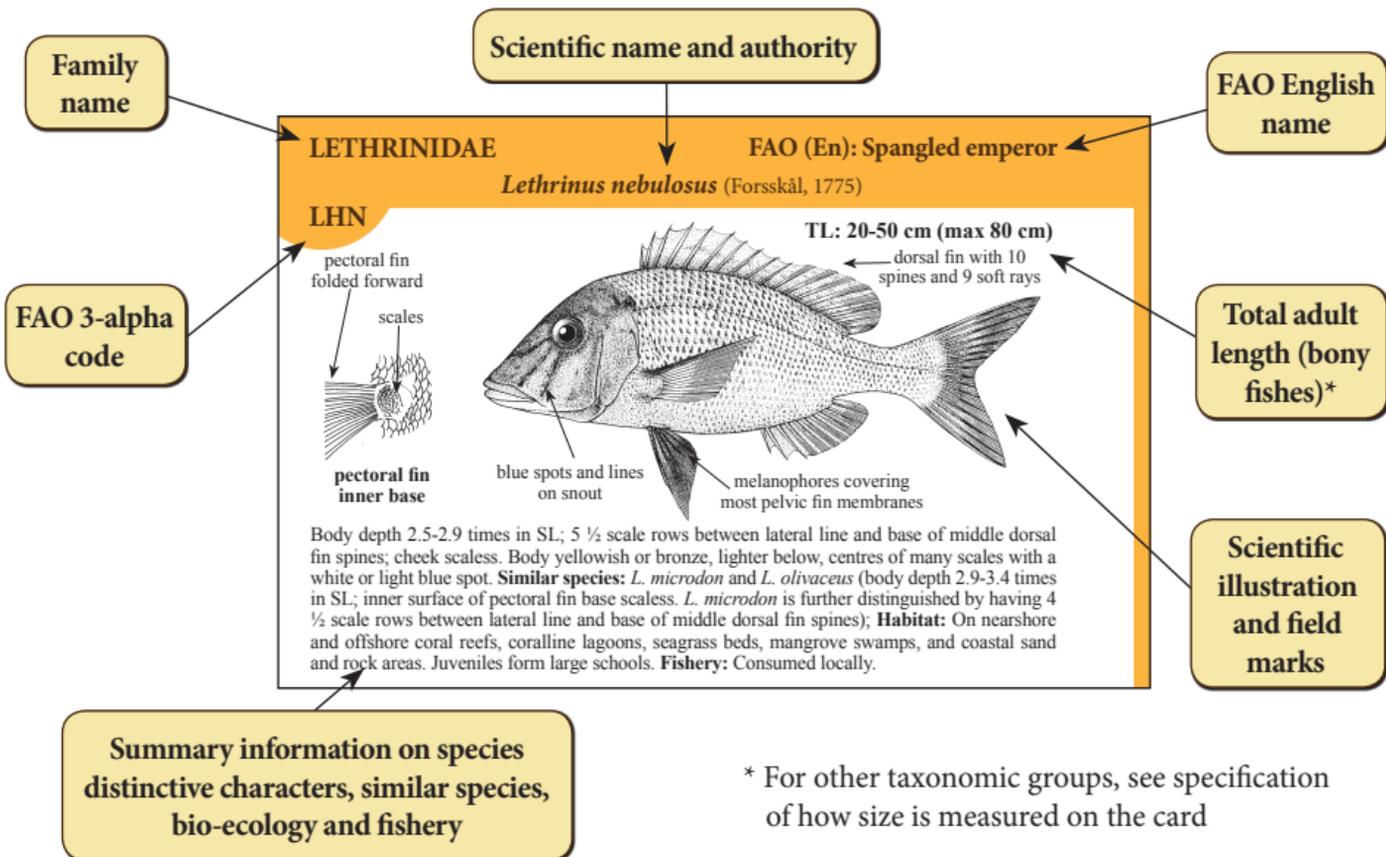
### Other Groups

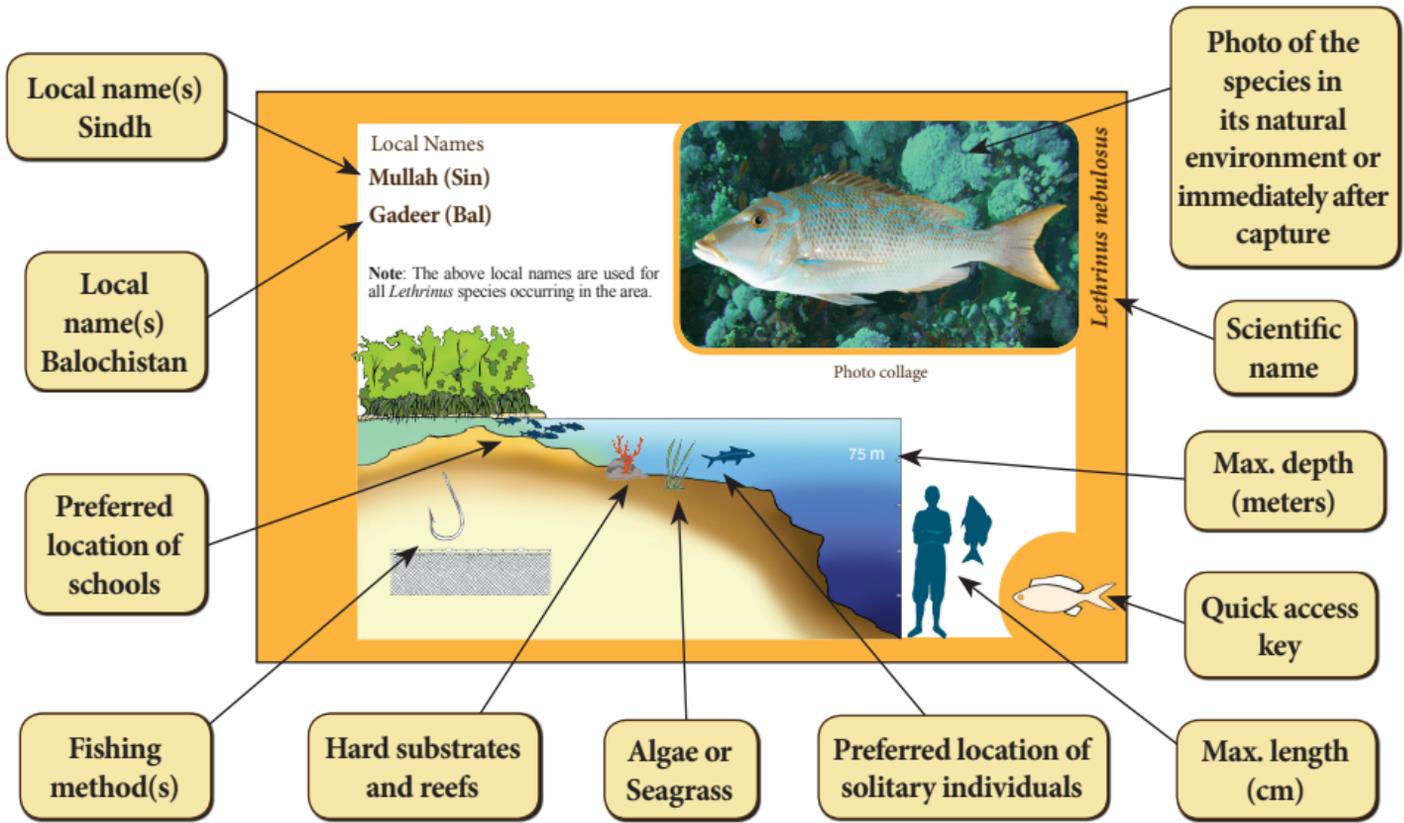


All other species



# HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE





**Local name(s)  
Sindh**

**Local name(s)  
Balochistan**

**Preferred location of schools**

**Fishing method(s)**

**Hard substrates and reefs**

**Algae or Seagrass**

**Preferred location of solitary individuals**

**Photo of the species in its natural environment or immediately after capture**

**Scientific name**

**Max. depth (meters)**

**Quick access key**

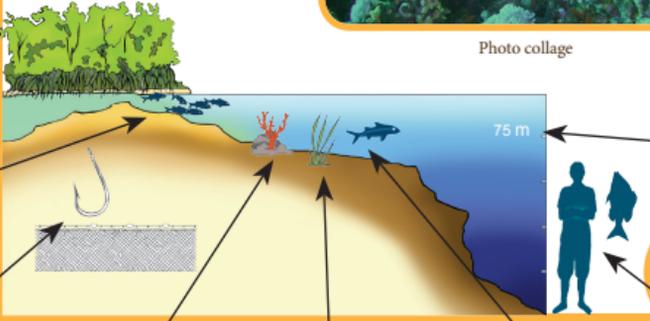
**Max. length (cm)**

**Local Names**  
**Mullah (Sin)**  
**Gadeer (Bal)**

**Note:** The above local names are used for all *Lethrinus* species occurring in the area.



**Photo collage**



*Lethrinus nebulosus*

## Fishing Methods



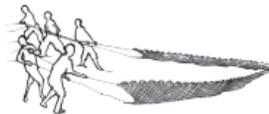
bottom trawls



hooks and line, trolling



set stake net



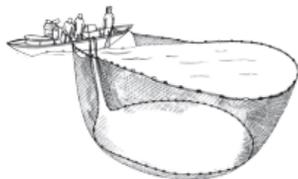
beach seine



set bag net



pelagic gill net (drift net)



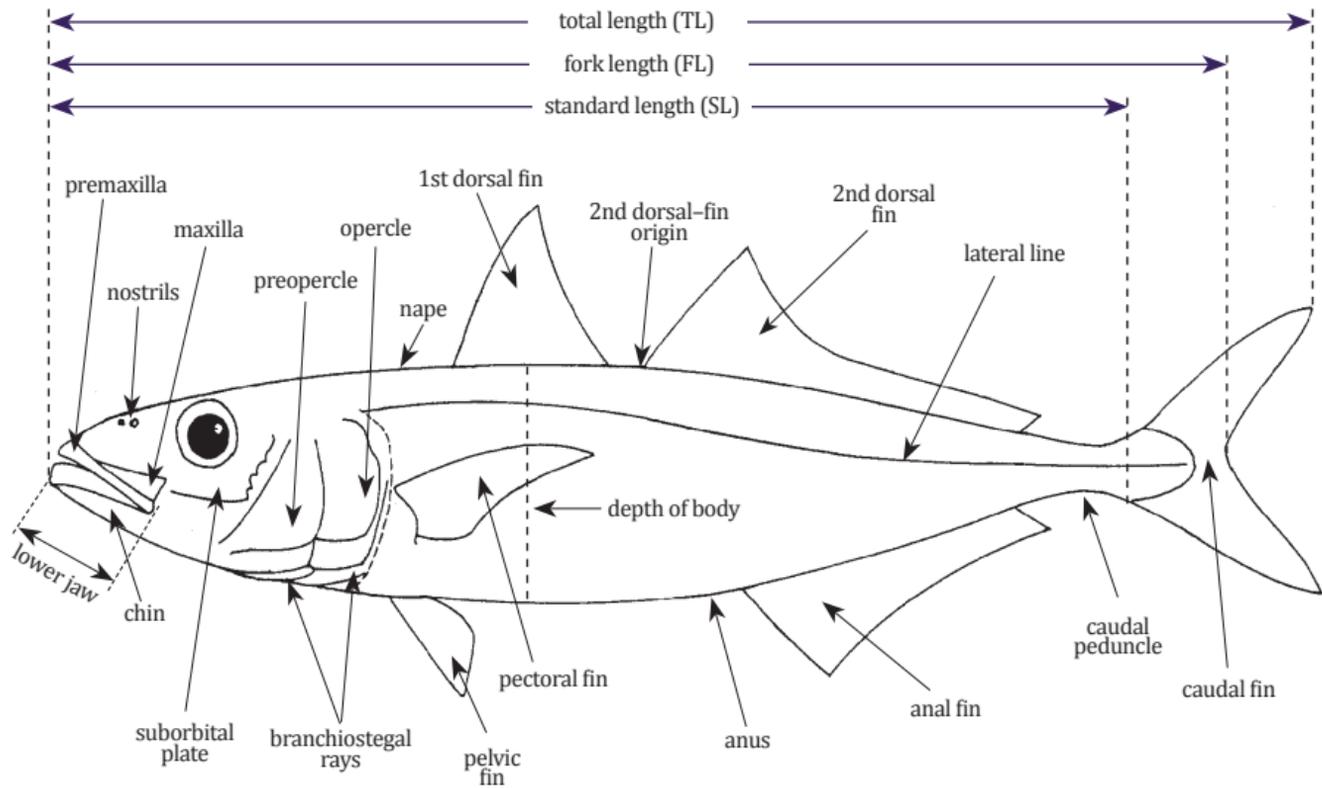
encircling net



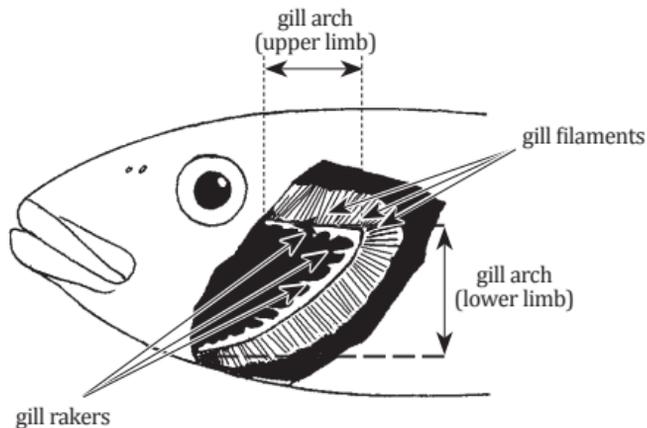
set gill nets



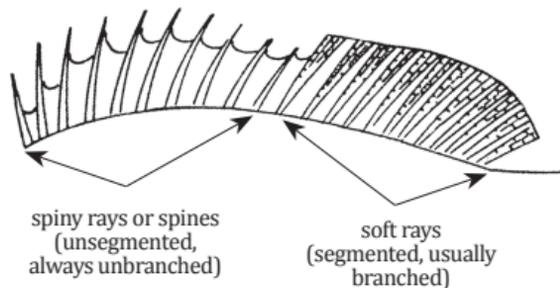
cast net



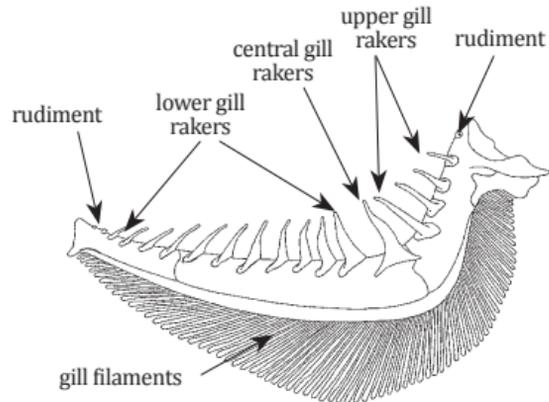
**General nomenclature of a bony fish external morphology**



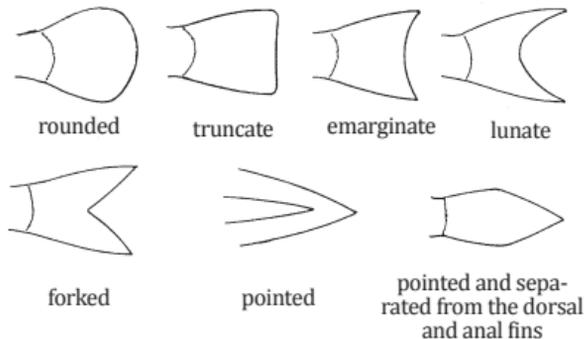
**Position of 1st left gill arch with gill cover removed**



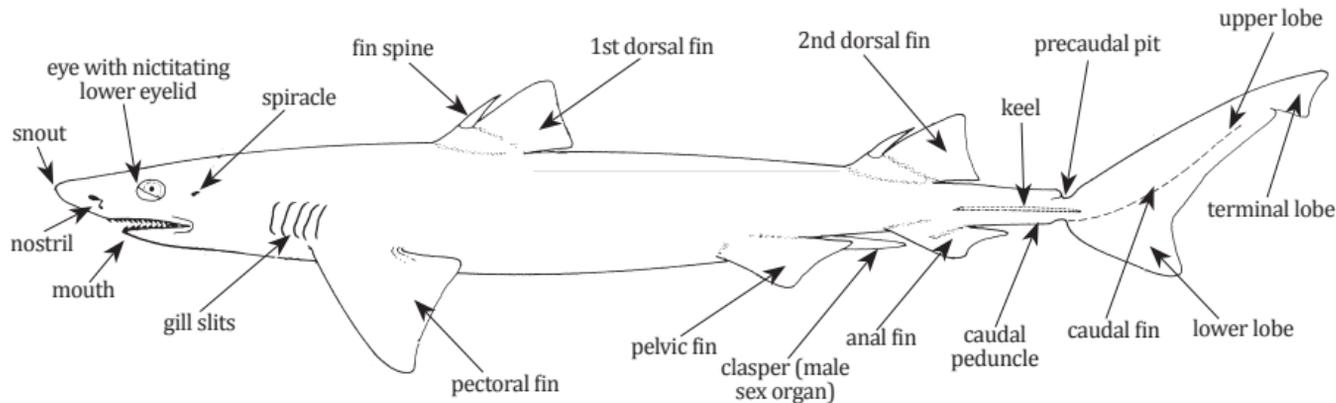
**Example of a continuous dorsal fin of a spiny-rayed fish**



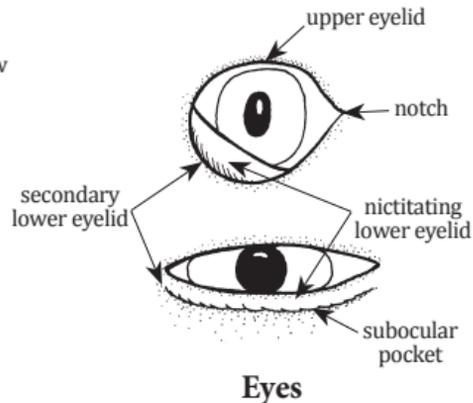
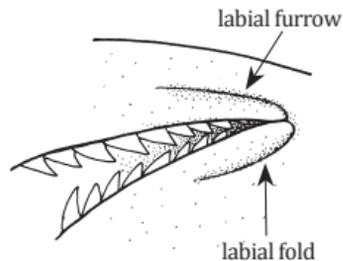
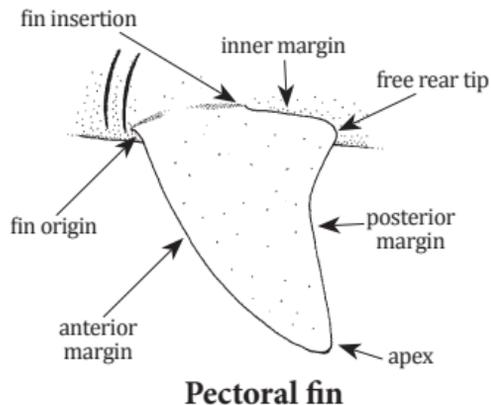
**Structures of 1st left gill**



**Most common types of caudal fins**



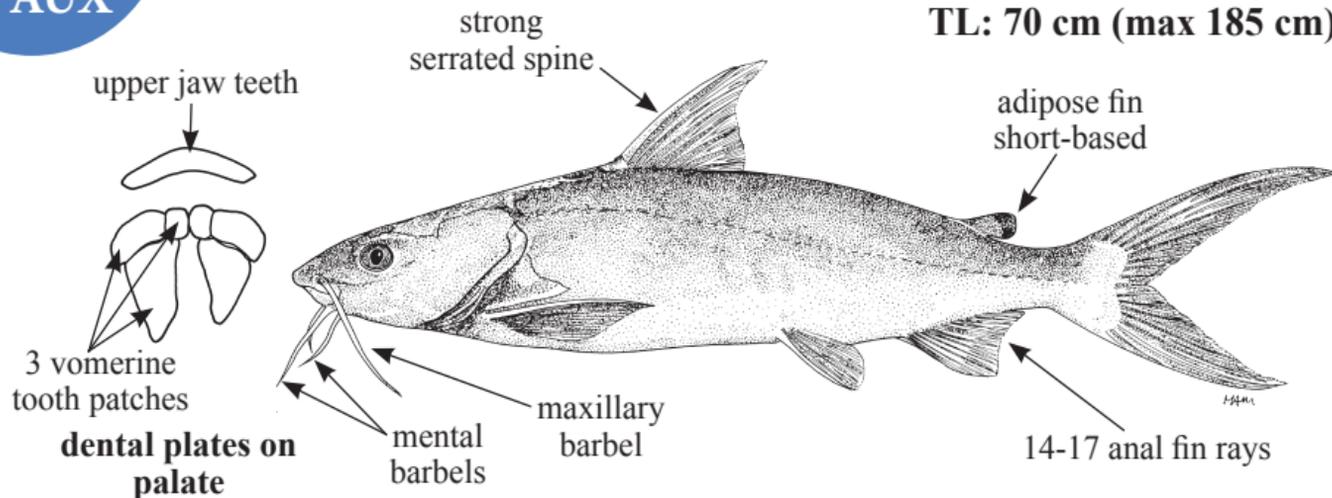
### General nomenclature of a shark's external morphology



*Netuma thalassina* (Rüppell, 1837)

AUX

TL: 70 cm (max 185 cm)



Snout prominent and somewhat pointed; mouth inferior. Vomerine tooth patches separated at palate midline. Body iridescence coppery or golden. **Similar species:** *Netuma bilineata* (17-21 anal fin rays; snout rounded, not prominent; mouth subterminal; body iridescence bronze); *Batrachocephalus mino* (maxillary barbels absent); *Osteogeneiosus militaris*: only a pair of stiff, semiosseous maxillary barbels present (no mental barbels). Other Ariidae have only 1 or 2 vomerine tooth patches on each side of palate. **Habitat:** Coastal marine and brackish waters. Feeds on fish, benthic invertebrates and detritus. Males incubate the eggs and brood young in their mouths. **Fishery:** Marketed fresh locally; small quantities exported in frozen and salted dried form.

Local Names

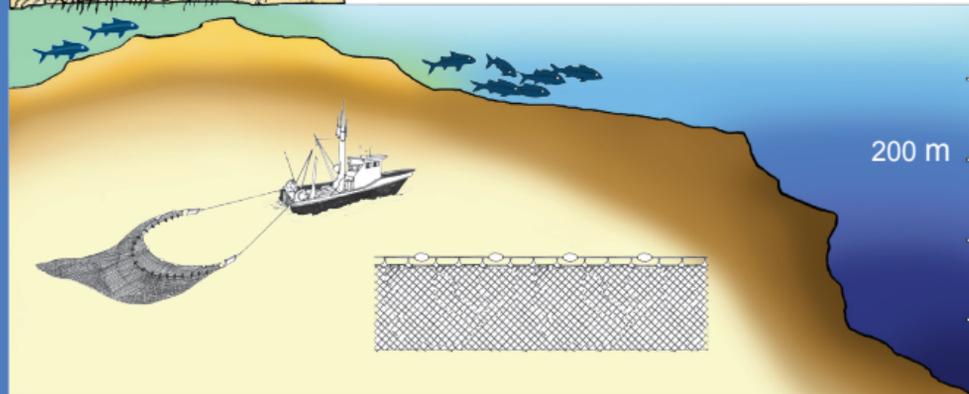
**Khagga, Shokiar, Rainji (Sin)**

**Kun, Gallo, Raingi, Kup-a-go,  
Bargai (Bal)**



*Netuma thalassina*

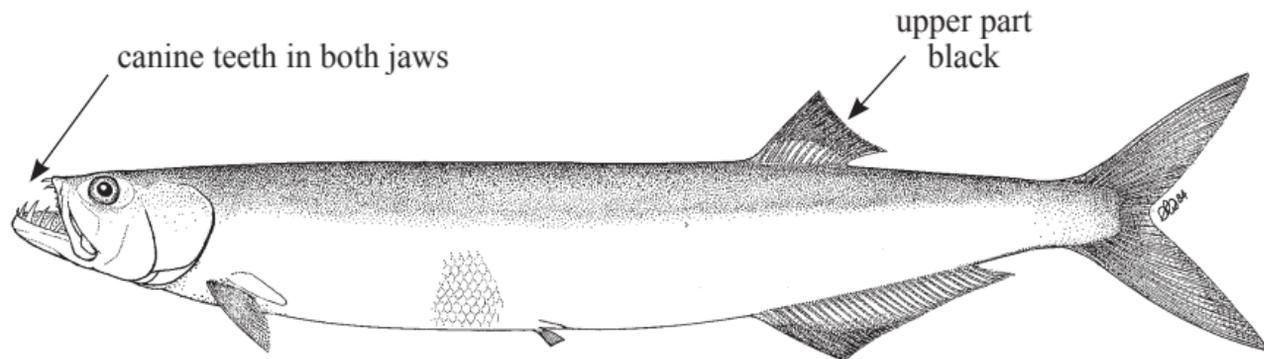
Photo: ©Hamid Badar Osmany



*Chirocentrus dorab* (Forsskål, 1775)

DOB

SL: 30-50 cm (max 100 cm)



Body elongate, strongly compressed, belly sharp, but without scutes; pectoral fins relatively short (11-13% of SL). Blue-green with a tinge of violet on back, flanks silvery. **Similar species:** *C. nudus* (pectoral fins longer, 13-18% of SL; upper part of dorsal fin without black markings). **Habitat:** Pelagic, inshore, occurring from the surface to a depth of about 120 m. Feeding occurs diurnally mainly on small fishes (primarily clupeids and engraulids). **Fishery:** Mainly consumed locally; small quantities exported in frozen form.

Local Names

**Gairi (Sin)**

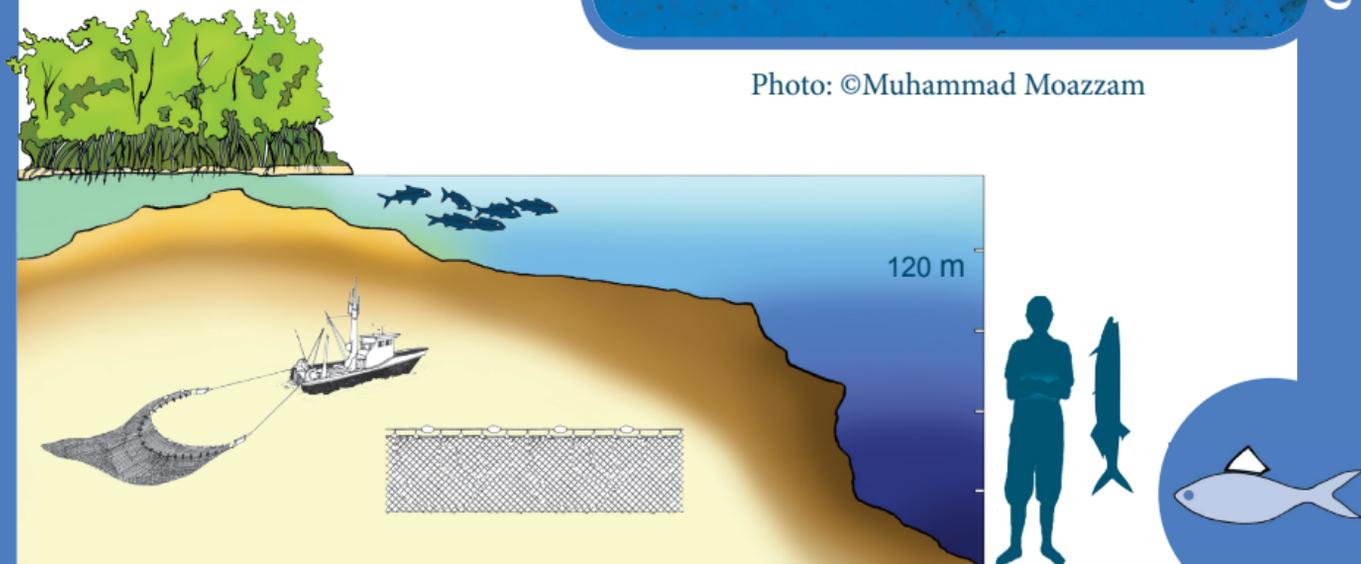
**Pashant (Bal)**

**Note:** The above local names are used also for *C. nudus*.



*Chirocentrus dorab*

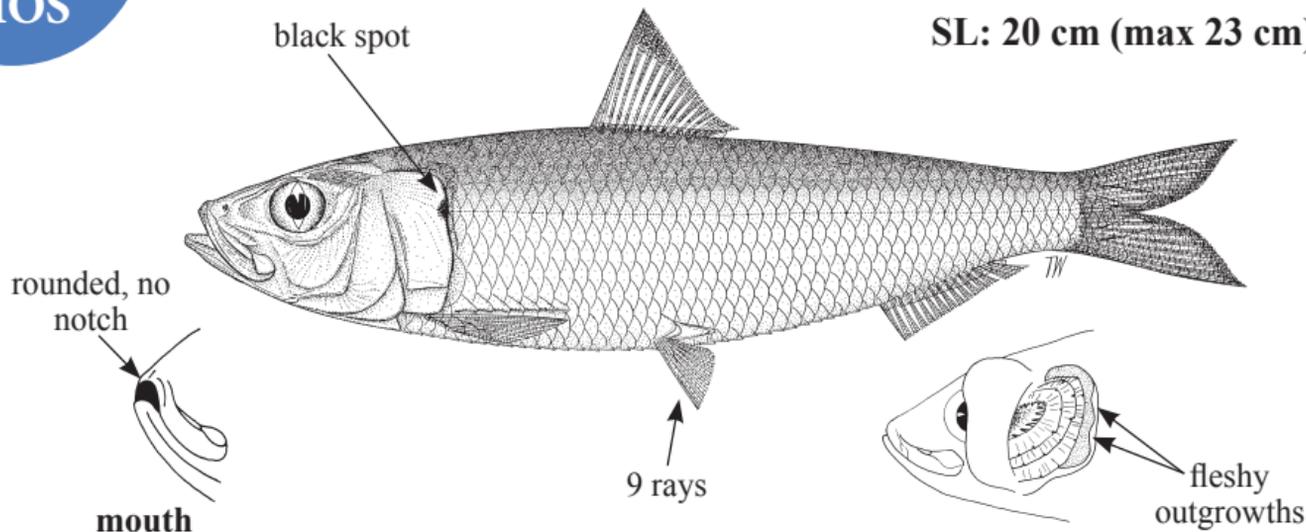
Photo: ©Muhammad Moazzam



*Sardinella longiceps* Valenciennes, 1847

IOS

SL: 20 cm (max 23 cm)



Body elongate, subcylindrical, belly rounded with a low keel of scutes. Head long, 29-35% of SL. 150-255 gill rakers on first gill arch. A faint golden spot behind gill opening, followed by a faint golden midlateral line. **Similar species:** *S. neglecta* (head shorter, 27-29% of SL; also, found only off the east African coast); other *Sardinella* species (only 8 pelvic fin rays and 32-133 gill rakers). **Habitat:** Coastal, pelagic, schooling, strongly migratory. Feeds mainly on phytoplankton filtered by very fine gill rakers. **Fishery:** Mainly used as raw material for fish meal; also consumed locally and exported in frozen form.

Local Names

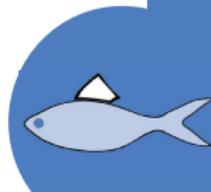
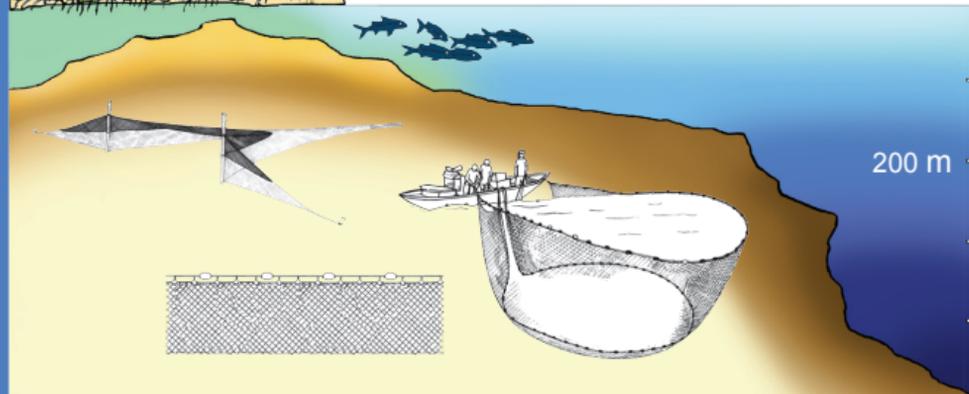
**Luar (Sin)**

**Lujar, Leejar (Bal)**



*Sardinella longiceps*

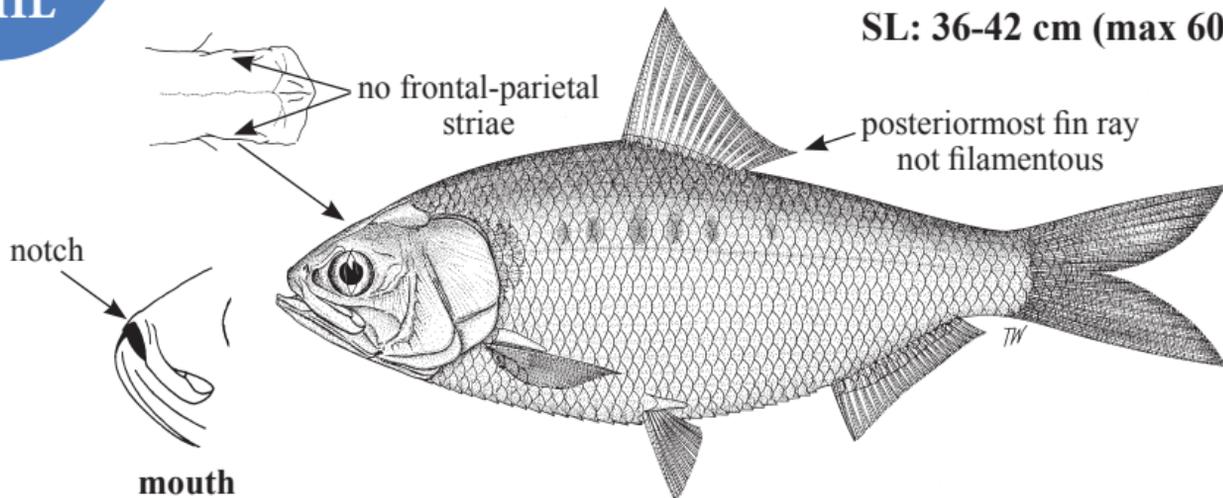
Photo: ©Muhammad Moazzam



*Tenualosa ilisha* (Hamilton, 1822)

HIL

SL: 36-42 cm (max 60 cm)



Body compressed, abdomen with 30-33 scutes. 37-47 scales in lateral series. Head length 28-32% of SL; caudal fin 25-31% of SL; mouth terminal, upper jaw with distinct median notch. A dark blotch behind gill opening, followed by a series of small spots along flank. **Similar species:** *T. toli* (head shorter, 25-27% of SL and caudal fin longer, 31-34% of SL; at most a diffuse spot behind gill opening, but never any spots on flanks); *Hilsa kelee* (top of head with numerous fronto-parietal striae); *Gudusia chapra* (77-91 scales in lateral series); *Nematalosa* and *Anodontostoma* species (mouth inferior, last dorsal fin ray filamentous in *Nematalosa*). **Habitat:** Marine, pelagic in coastal waters, euryhaline, anadromous, ascending rivers for as much 1200 km. **Fishery:** Mainly consumed locally.

## Local Names

**Palla (Sin)**

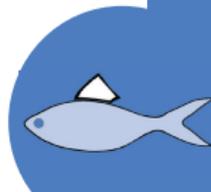
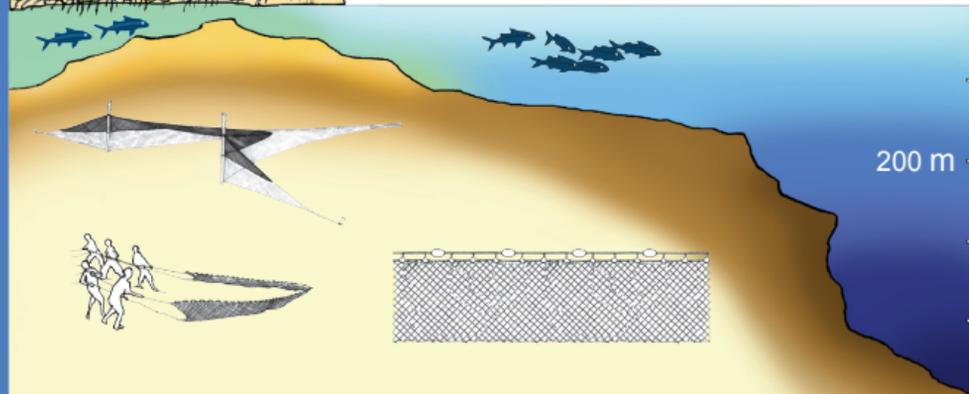
**Palwar (Bal)**

**Note:** The above local names are used also for *T. toli*.



*Tenulosa ilisha*

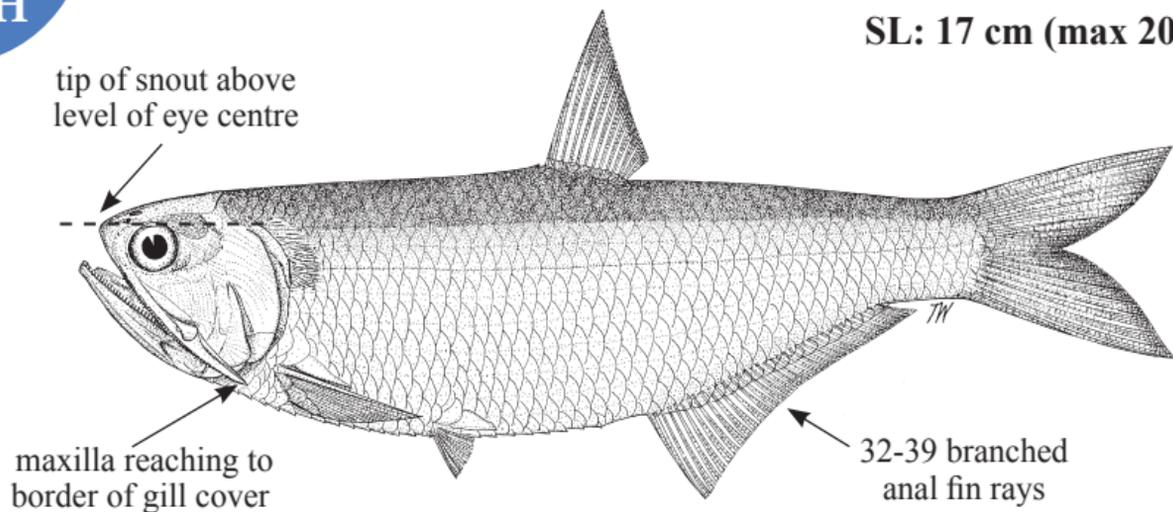
Photo: ©Hamid Badar Osmany



*Thryssa hamiltonii* (Gray, 1835)

EYH

SL: 17 cm (max 20 cm)



Body compressed, abdomen with usually 16-19 prepelvic and 10-11 postpelvic scutes; lower gill rakers 12-14 (less often 11 or 15). Back blue/green or brown, with dark median bands or lines, flanks silvery; a black venulose area behind gill opening; pectoral, pelvic and caudal fins yellowish. **Similar species:** *T. malabarica* (17-19 lower gill rakers; no dark median band or lines on back); *T. dayi* (40-45 branched anal fin rays; maxilla longer, reaching to pectoral fin base); other *Thryssa* species (tip of snout at level of eye centre). **Habitat:** Pelagic in coastal waters; also entering estuaries. **Fishery:** Mainly used as raw material for fish meal.

## Local Names

**Karari, Karadi, Padan (Sin)**

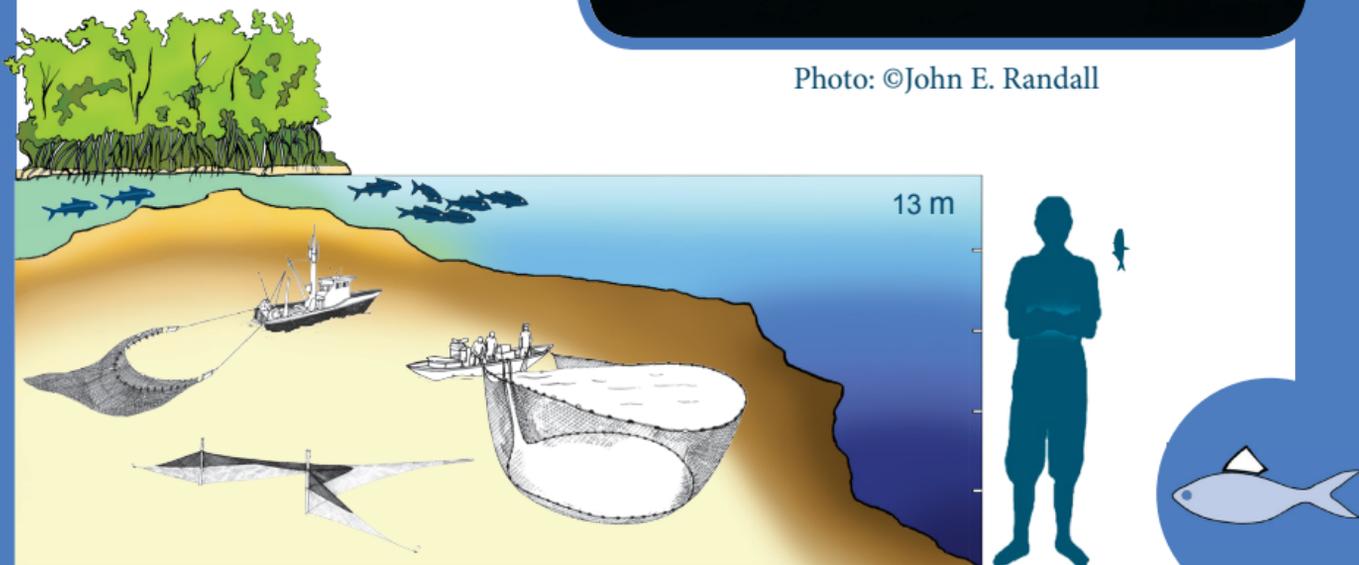
**Padni (Bal)**

**Note:** The above local names are used for all *Thryssa* species occurring in the area.



*Thryssa hamiltonii*

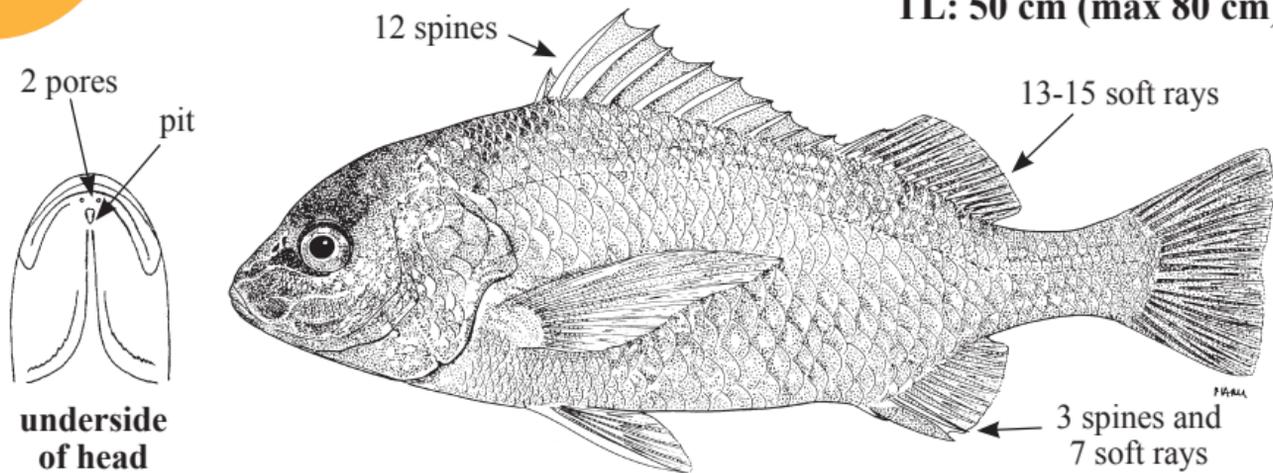
Photo: ©John E. Randall



*Pomadasys kaakan* (Cuvier, 1830)

KAH

TL: 50 cm (max 80 cm)



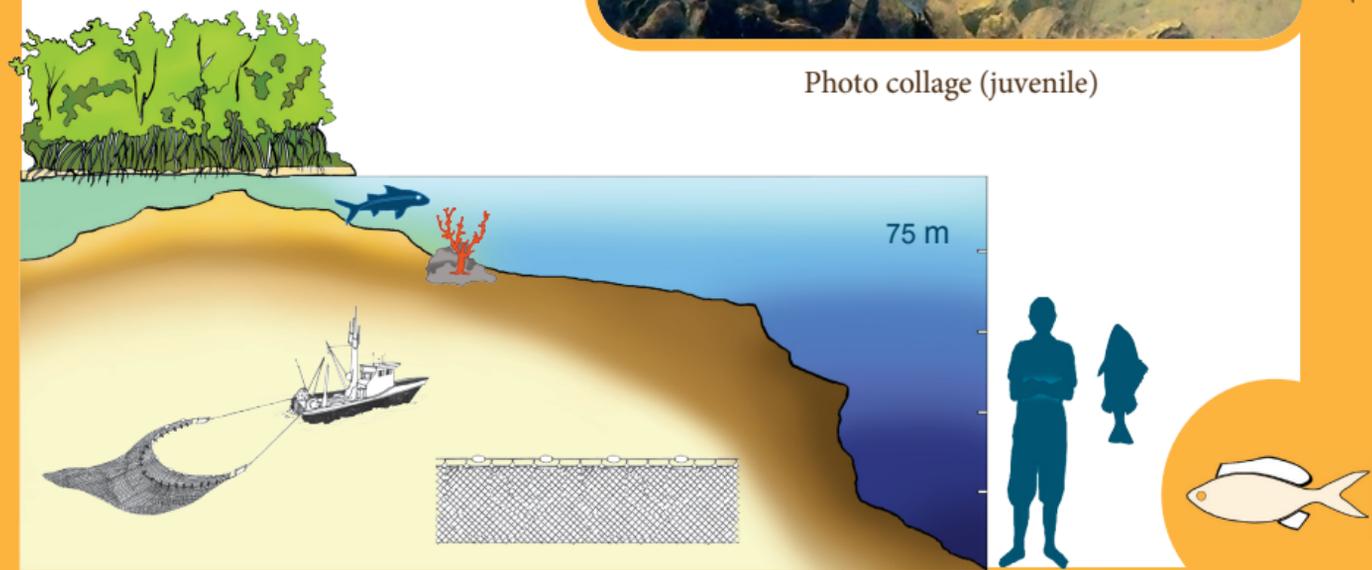
Body oblong and compressed; 7 scales between lateral line and dorsal fin origin. Juveniles with 12 or more faint vertical bars comprised of small dark brown spots or irregular blotches; spots also on dorsal fins; adults uniform golden green above, silvery below with traces of the vertical bars present only when alive. **Similar species:** *P. maculatus*, *P. commersonnii*, *P. multimaculatus* and *P. argenteus* (large blotches or evenly distributed spots present on body and fins); *P. argyreus* and *P. olivaceus* (dorsal fin without spots, body silvery); *P. furcatus* and *P. stridens* (very distinct longitudinal stripes on body); *Plectorhinchus* species: 6 pores and no median pit on chin. **Habitat:** Inhabits coastal waters, estuaries and reefs. **Fishery:** Consumed locally and exported in chilled form.

Local Names  
**Dhotar (Sin)**  
**Kumpo (Bal)**



*Pomadasys kaakan*

Photo collage (juvenile)

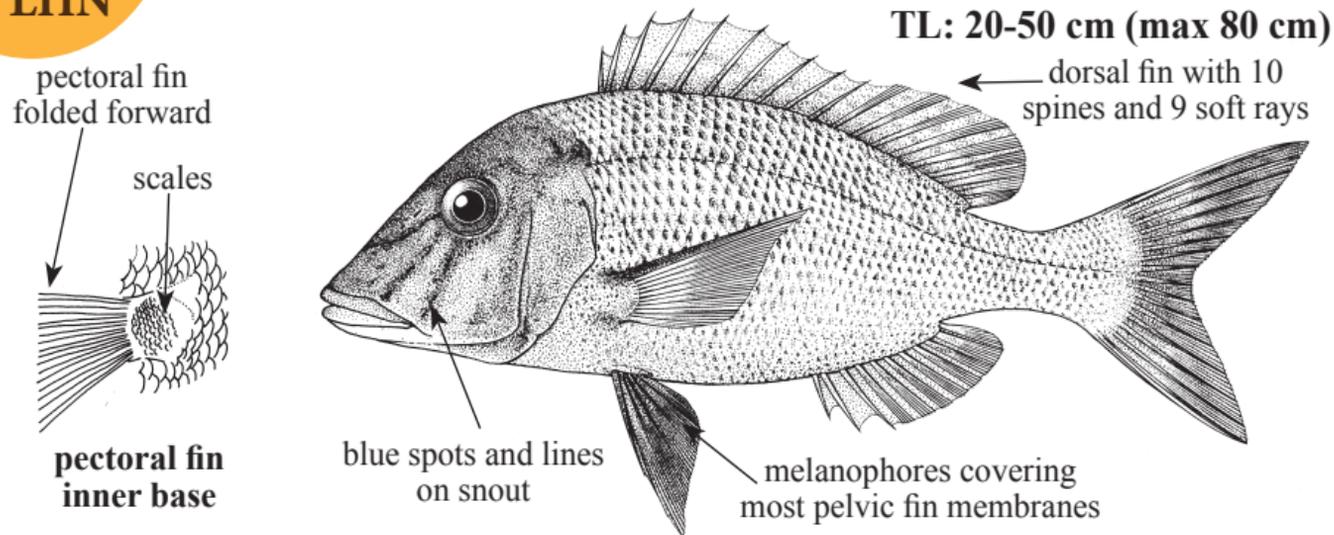


# LETHRINIDAE

FAO (En): Spangled emperor

*Lethrinus nebulosus* (Forsskal, 1775)

LHN



Body depth 2.5-2.9 times in SL; 5 ½ scale rows between lateral line and base of middle dorsal fin spines; cheek scales. Body yellowish or bronze, lighter below, centres of many scales with a white or light blue spot. **Similar species:** *L. microdon* and *L. olivaceus* (body depth 2.9-3.4 times in SL; inner surface of pectoral fin base scales. *L. microdon* is further distinguished by having 4 ½ scale rows between lateral line and base of middle dorsal fin spines); **Habitat:** On nearshore and offshore coral reefs, coralline lagoons, seagrass beds, mangrove swamps, and coastal sand and rock areas. Juveniles form large schools. **Fishery:** Consumed locally.

Local Names

**Mullah (Sin)**

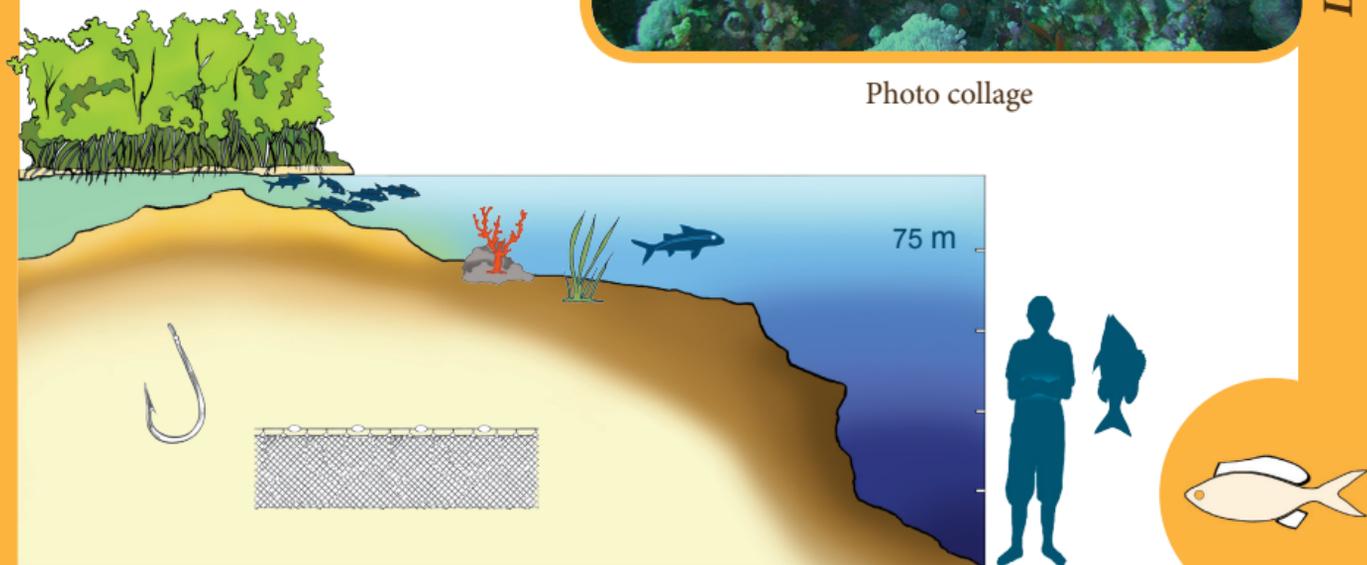
**Gadeer (Bal)**

**Note:** The above local names are used for all *Lethrinus* species occurring in the area.



*Lethrinus nebulosus*

Photo collage

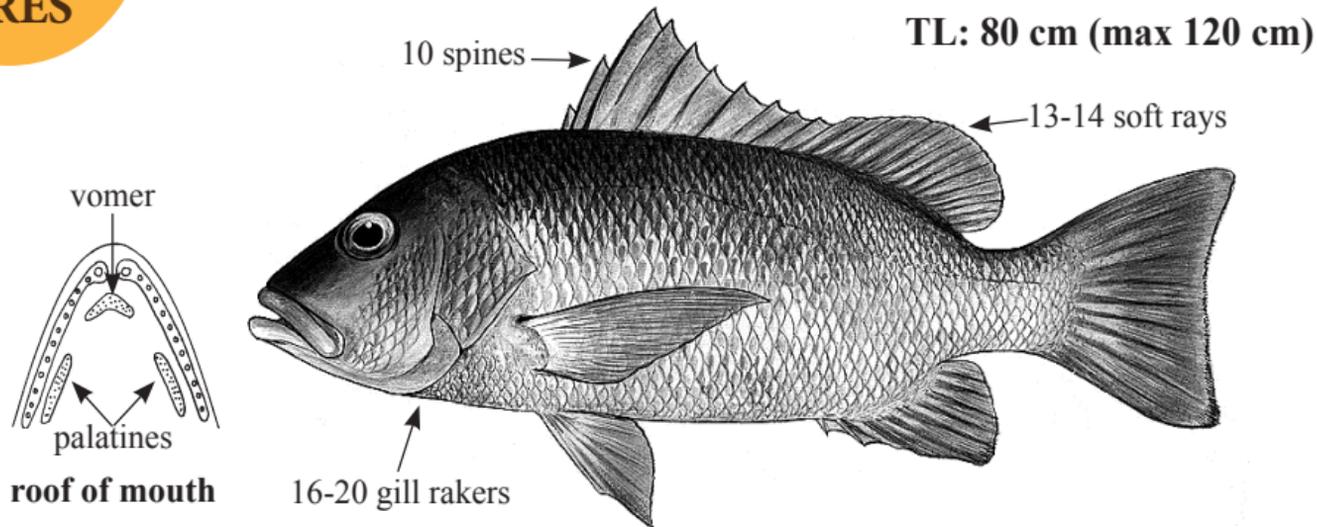


# LUTJANIDAE

# FAO (En): Mangrove red snapper

*Lutjanus argentimaculatus* (Forsskal, 1775)

RES



Body depth 2.5-3.1 times in SL. Jaw teeth conical and sharp with upper canines notably enlarged; tongue with a patch of granular teeth; scale rows on back more or less parallel to lateral line. Back and sides greenish brown to reddish; belly silvery or whitish. **Similar species:** Other red-coloured *Lutjanus* species (all scale rows above lateral line clearly oblique. Furthermore, 11 dorsal fin spines, tongue toothless in *L. malabaricus* and *L. sebae*). **Habitat:** Juveniles and young adults found in mangrove estuaries and in the lower reaches of fresh-water streams. Adults migrate offshore to deeper reef areas. **Fishery:** Consumed locally and exported in frozen and chilled forms.

Local Names

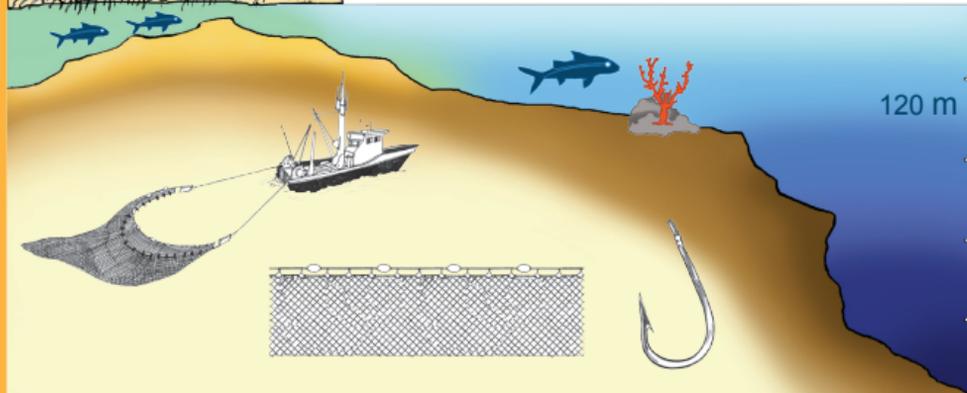
**Hira (Sin)**

**Kun-la, Ka-nal cha (Bal)**

**Note:** With the exception of *L. rivulatus*, the above local names are used for all Lutjanidae as well as for Emmelichthyidae and Caesionidae species occurring in the area.



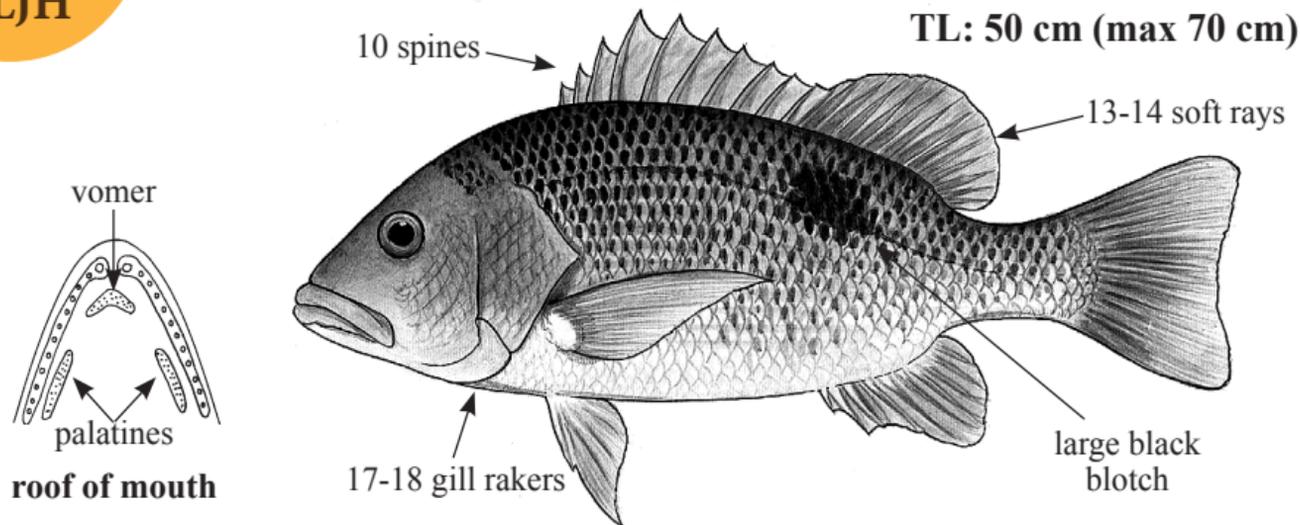
Photo collage



*Lutjanus argentimaculatus*

*Lutjanus johnii* (Bloch, 1792)

LJH



Body depth 2.4-2.9 times in SL. Jaw teeth conical and sharp with upper canines notably enlarged; tongue with a patch of granular teeth; scale rows on back parallel to lateral line. Body silvery green or bronze/red, with a distinct dark spot on each scale forming a length-wise series of dark streaks. **Similar species:** *L. ehrenbergii* (body with yellow stripes instead of dark streaks; blotch on back bisected by lateral line); *L. argentimaculatus* (no black blotch); other *Lutjanus* species (longitudinal scale rows above lateral line running obliquely upward). **Habitat:** Juveniles in brackish mangrove estuaries. Large adults in deeper waters. **Fishery:** Consumed locally and exported in frozen and chilled forms.

Local Names

**Hira (Sin)**

**Kun-la, Ka-nal cha (Bal)**

**Note:** With the exception of *L. rivulatus*, the above local names are used for all Lutjanidae as well as for Emmelichthyidae and Caesionidae species occurring in the area.

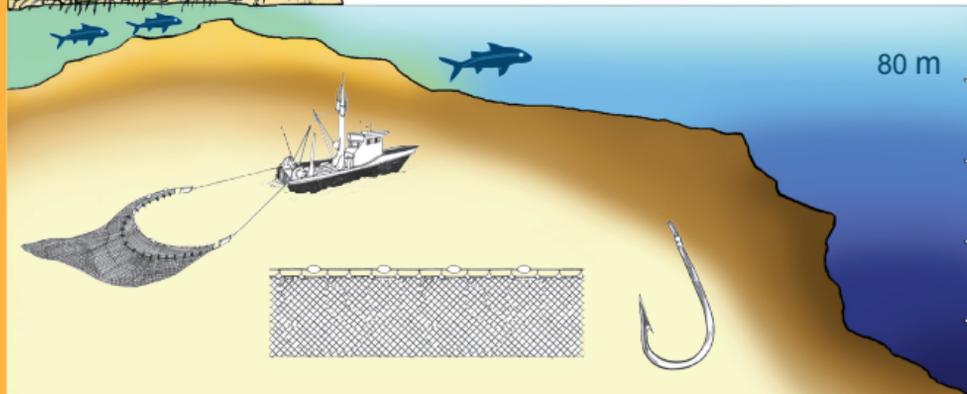


Photo collage

*Lutjanus johnii*

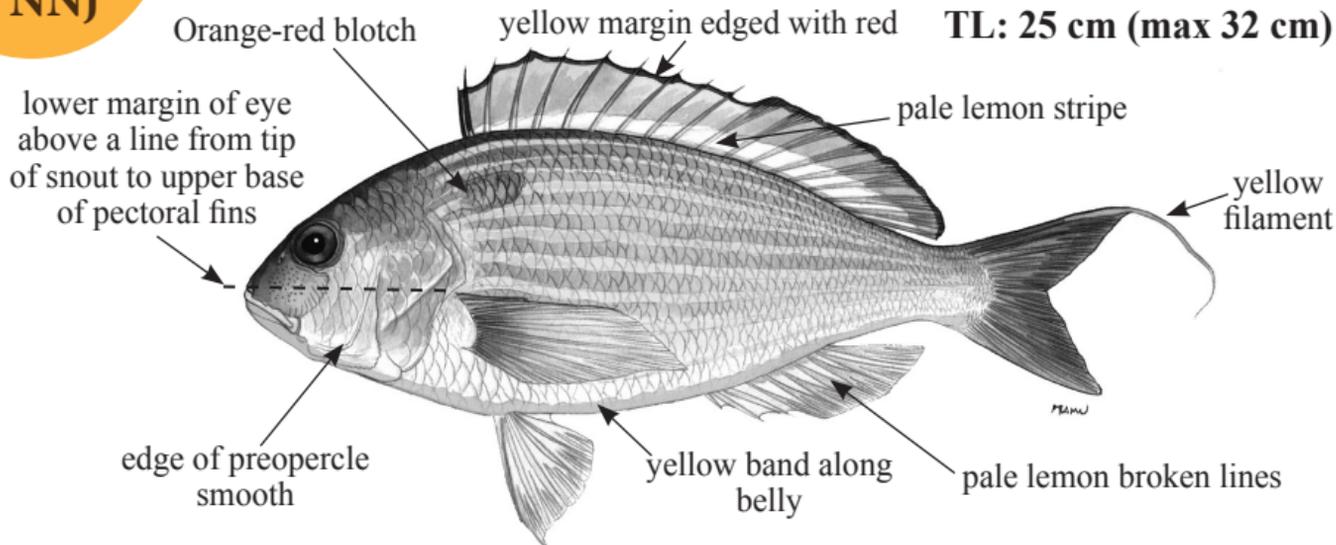


# NEMIPTERIDAE

# FAO (En): Japanese threadfin bream

*Nemipterus japonicus* (Bloch, 1791)

NNJ



Body depth 2.7-3.5 times in SL; 11-12 pale golden yellow stripes along body from behind head to base of caudal fin; **Similar species:** *N. randalli* (only 2-4 pale yellow stripes on sides below lateral line; lower margin of eye tangent to or just above a line from tip of snout to upper base of pectoral fins; caudal filament light reddish); other Nemipteridae (no caudal fin filament). **Habitat:** A benthic species, found on mud or sand bottoms in depths of 5-80 m, usually in schools. **Fishery:** Consumed locally, exported in frozen form also as raw material for surimi and fish meal.

Local Names

**Lal-pari, Chakori (Sin)**

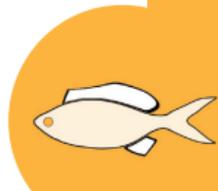
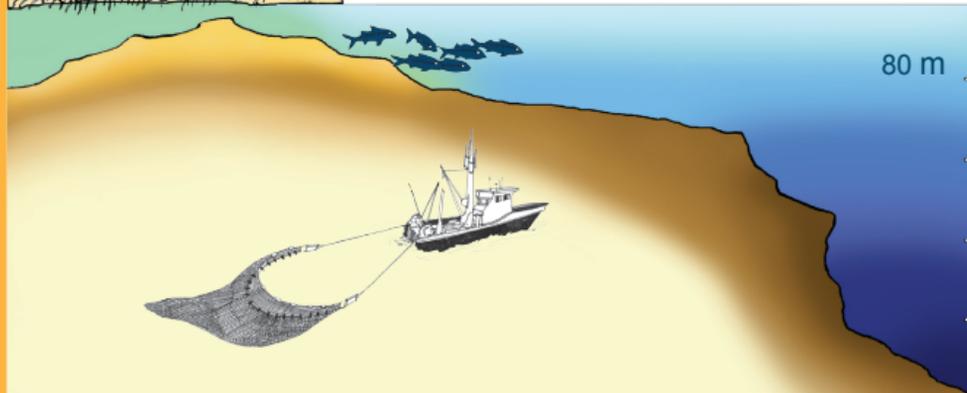
**Kolonto (Bal)**

**Note:** The above local names are used for all *Nemipterus* species occurring in the area.



*Nemipterus japonicus*

Photo: ©David C. Cook

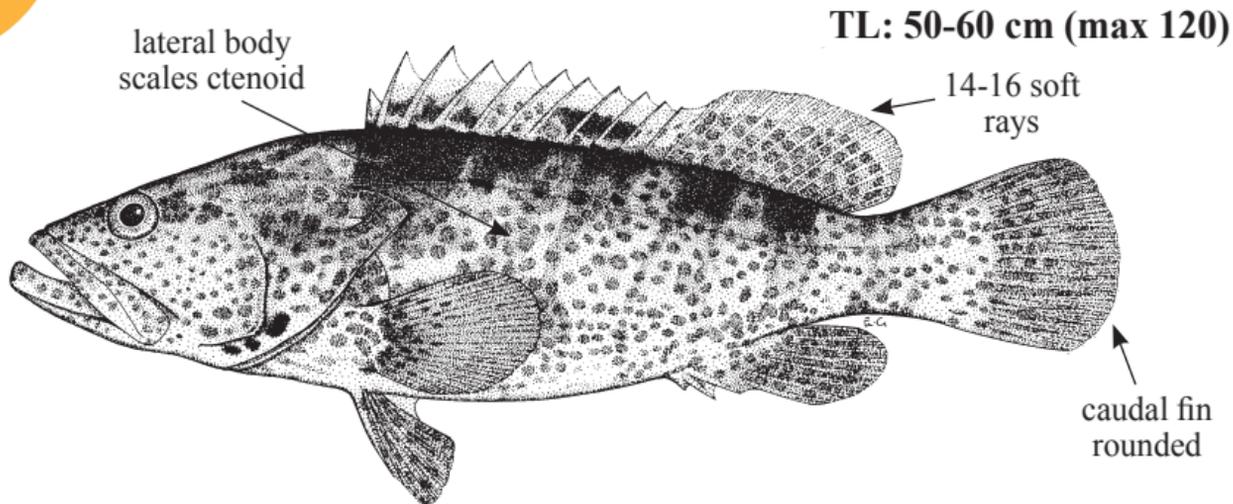


## SERRANIDAE

## FAO (En): Orange-spotted grouper

*Epinephelus coioides* (Hamilton, 1822)

ENI



Body elongate, its depth 2.9-3.7 times in SL; interorbital width 5.0-6.2 times in head length. Numerous small brownish orange or reddish brown spots on head, and median fins; body with 5 faint, irregular, oblique, dark bars which bifurcate ventrally. **Similar species:** *E. malabaricus* (dark spots are smaller and blackish brown; also irregular white spots on head and body); *E. polylepis* (usually 17 soft dorsal fin rays; caudal fin truncate/emarginate; head, body, and fins pale, covered with numerous small close-set dark brown spots). **Habitat:** Estuaries and offshore to depths of 100 m. Feeds on fishes, shrimps, crabs, and cephalopods **Fishery:** Locally consumed and exported in frozen and chilled form.

## Local Names

**Gisser, Mait (Sin)**

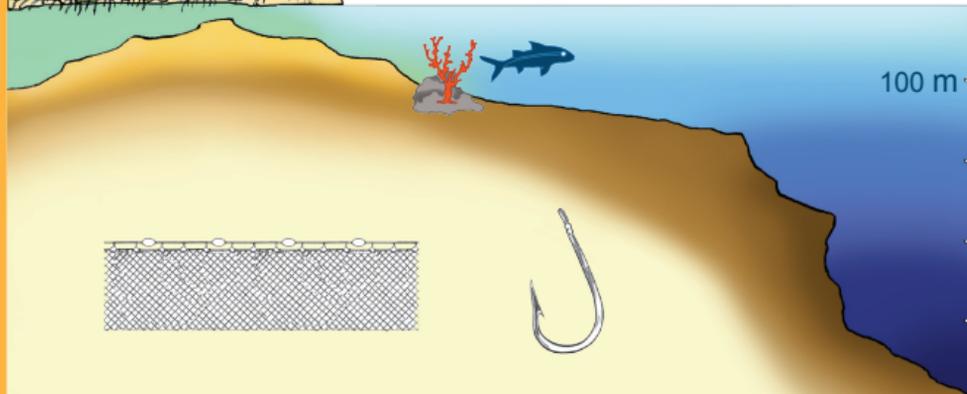
**Nambo, Lotari, Komait (Bal)**

**Note:** The above local names are used also for other *Epinephelus* species.



*Epinephelus coioides*

Photo: © John E. Randall

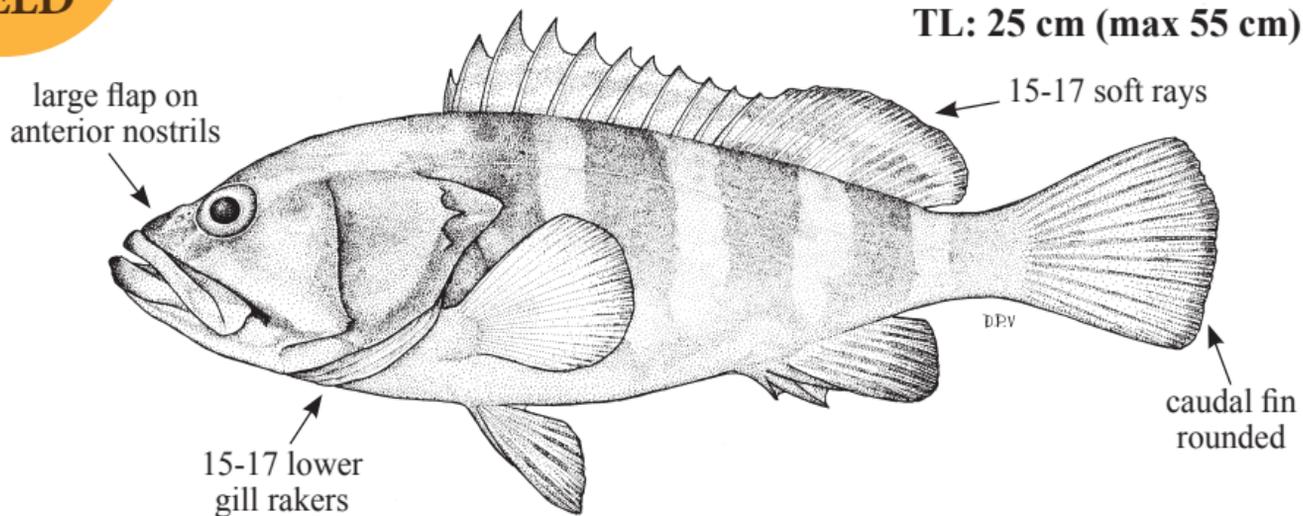


## SERRANIDAE

## FAO (En): Spinycheek grouper

*Epinephelus diacanthus* (Valenciennes, 1828)

ELD



Body depth contained 2.8-3.5 times in SL; head large, its length contained 2.2-2.4 times in SL; lateral body scales ctenoid. Body pale greyish brown, usually with 5 dark vertical bars broader than interspaces. **Similar species:** *E. stoliczkae* (spots on anterior part of the body; 13-15 lower gill rakers); *E. epistictus* (no dark bars on body; no large flap on anterior nostrils); *E. latifasciatus* (12-14 dorsal fin soft rays; lateral body scales smooth; juveniles brown, with 2 horizontal white bands). **Habitat:** Demersal on mud or muddy sand bottom in depths of 10 to 120 m. Feeds mainly on crustaceans and fish. **Fishery:** Consumed locally and exported in frozen and chilled forms.

Local Names

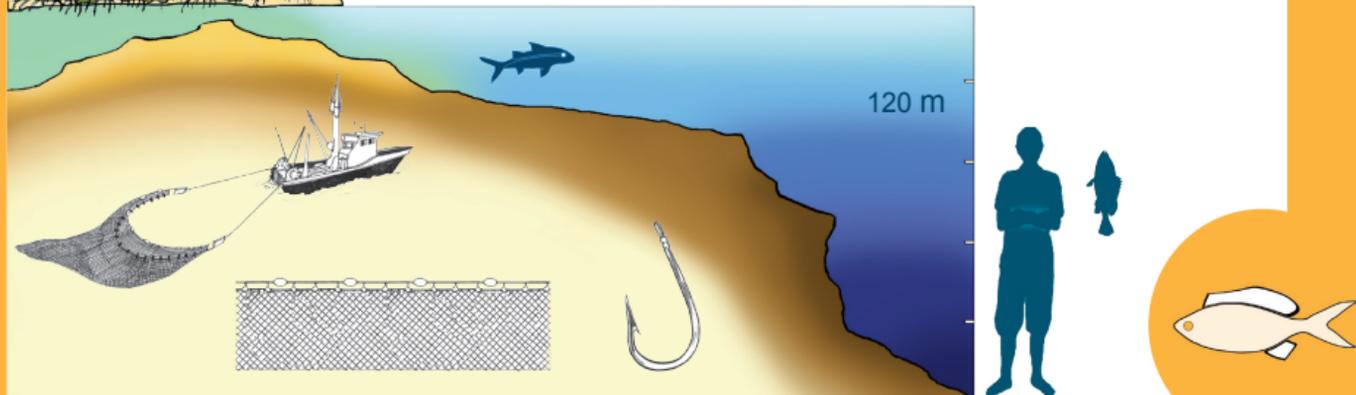
**Damba (Sin)**

**Chancho (Bal)**

**Note:** “Damba” and “Chancho” are used only for this species.



Photo: ©Paul L. Fanning

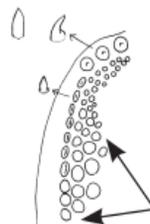
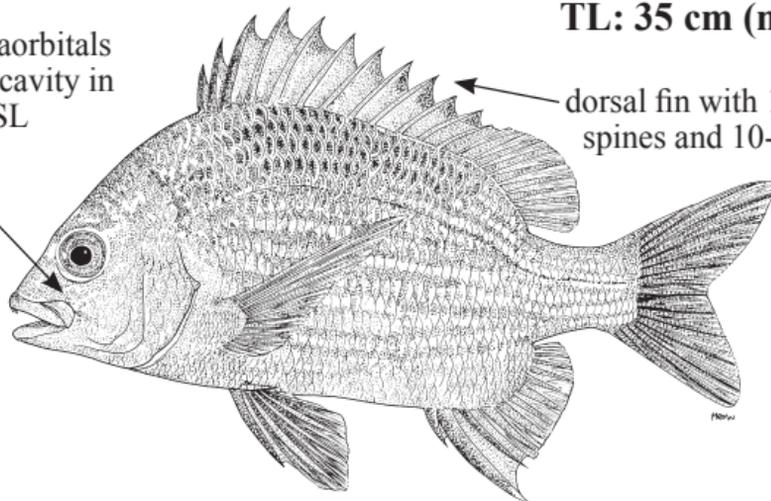


*Epinephelus diacanthus*

*Acanthopagrus berda* (Forsskål, 1775)

MLB

TL: 35 cm (max 90 cm)

ventral edge of infraorbitals  
with prominent concavity in  
fish >15 cm SLdorsal fin with 11 (rarely 12)  
spines and 10-13 soft raysMolar teeth  
posteriorlyright half  
of upper jaw

Body fairly deep and compressed; usually  $3 \frac{1}{2}$  scale rows between lateral line and 5th dorsal fin spine. Silvery to blackish on upper part of body, lower part of head and body paler (some individuals completely black); soft dorsal, anal, pelvic, and caudal fins blackish. **Similar species:** *A. arabicus* and *A. sheim* (scale rows between 5th dorsal fin spine base and lateral line  $4 \frac{1}{2}$ ; ventral edge of infraorbitals straight; pelvic and anal fins vivid yellow and faint yellow, respectively); **Habitat:** A bottom-living fish, found mainly on rough and muddy sand grounds in coastal waters, particularly in estuaries, from shallow water to depths of about 50 m. Feeds on a wide variety of bottom invertebrates. **Fishery:** Consumed locally.

## Local Names

**Kara dandyo, Dandia, Paaloo**  
**(Sin)**

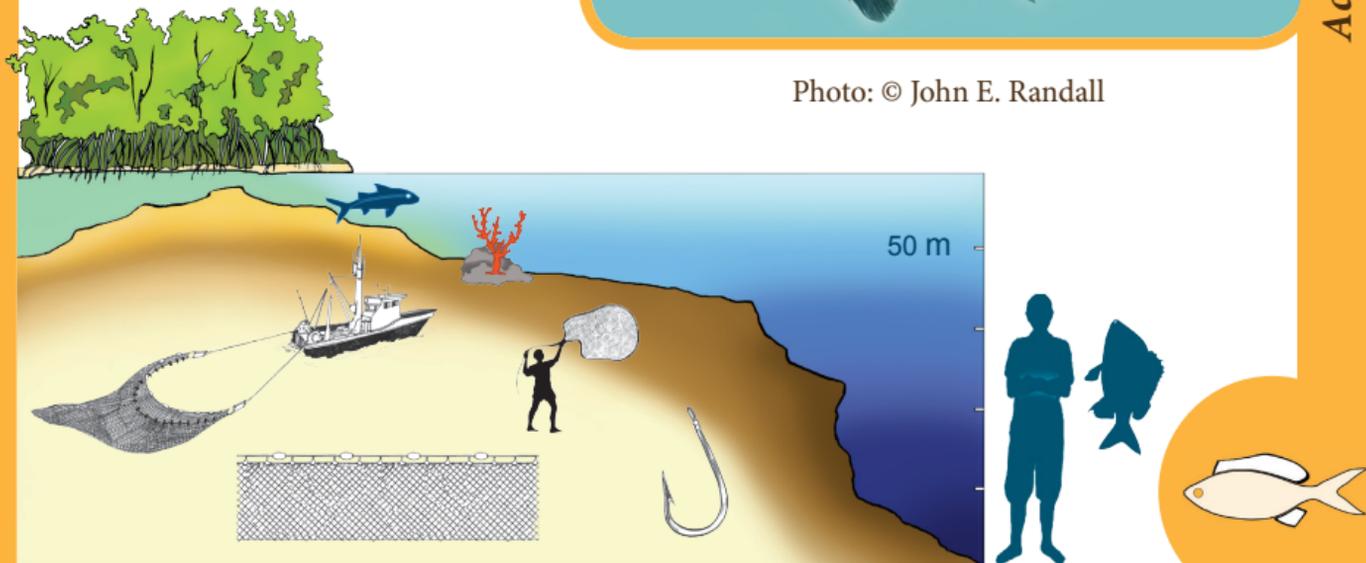
**Cha (Bal)**

**Note:** The above local names are used also for *A. sheim*.



*Acanthopagrus berda*

Photo: © John E. Randall

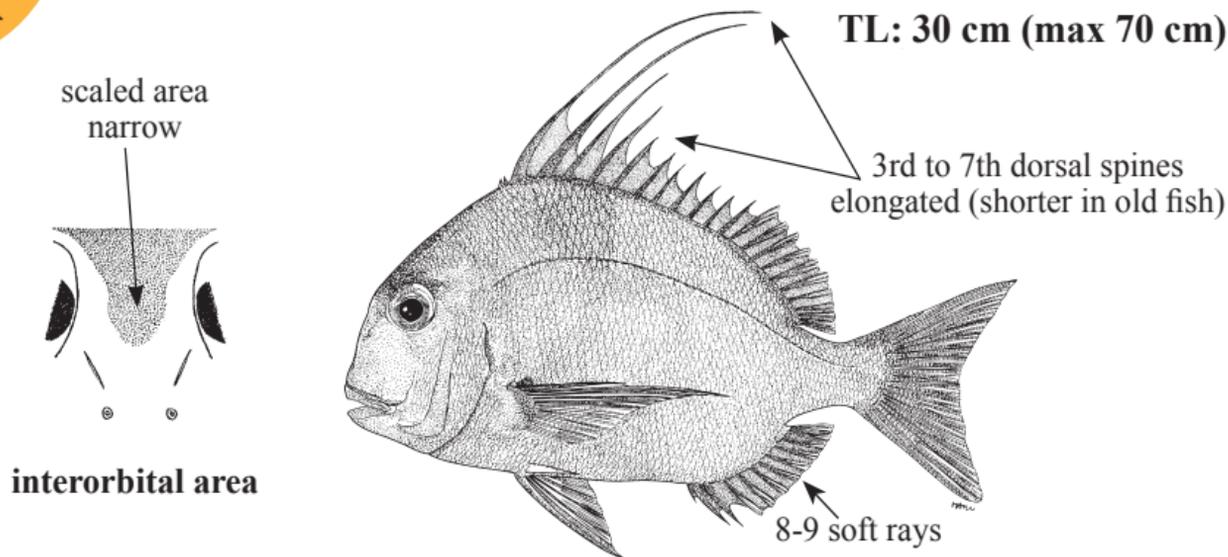


# SPARIDAE

# FAO (En): King soldier bream

## *Argyrops spinifer* (Forsskal, 1775)

KBR



Body deep, strongly compressed; upper profile of head almost straight from upper jaw to eye; molar teeth posteriorly in jaws. Body mainly silvery pinkish, darker on head; all fins red; **Similar species:** *A. filamentosus* (only 3rd and sometimes 4th dorsal spine elongate; scale area between eyes broad); *Cheimerius nufar* (profile of head not as steep and curving gently up to nape; no molar teeth); other Sparidae (no elongate spine in dorsal fin greater than head length). **Habitat:** inhabits a wide range of bottoms (usually at depths between 5-100 m). Feeds on bottom-living invertebrates, mainly molluscs. **Fishery:** Consumed locally.

## Local Names

**Dand, Kharak paaloo (Sin)**

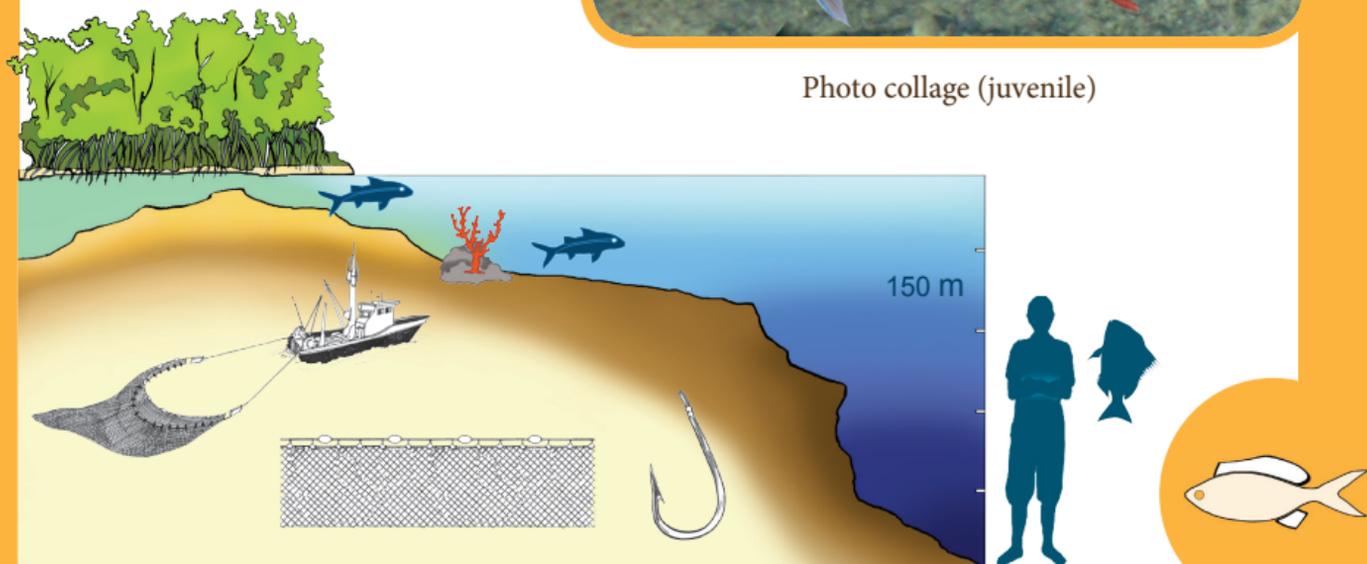
**Sorro, Malelak, Dand (Bal)**

**Note:** The above local names are used also for *A. filamentosus* and *Cheimerius nufar*.



*Argyrops spinifer*

Photo collage (juvenile)



SCIAENIDAE

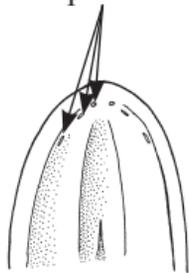
FAO (En): Arabian sea meagre

*Argyrosomus heinii* (Steindachner, 1902)

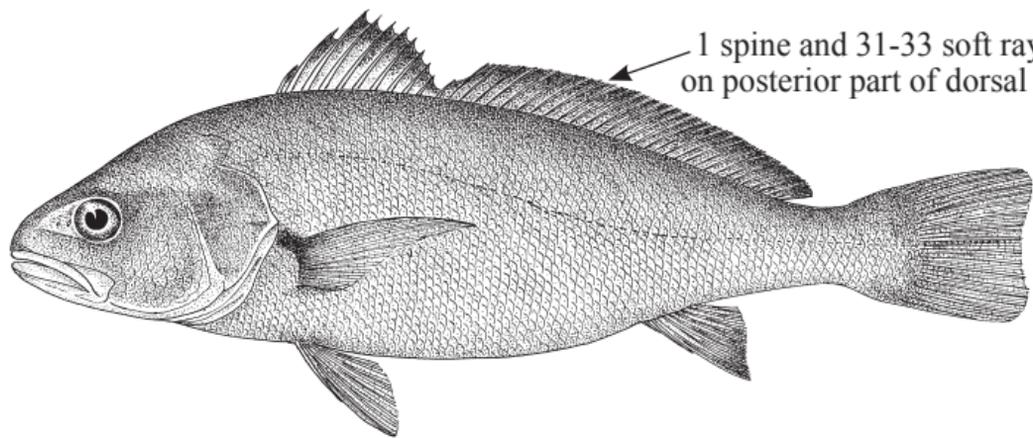
QXN

TL: 40 cm (max 60 cm)

3 pairs of mental  
pores



underside  
of head



1 spine and 31-33 soft rays  
on posterior part of dorsal fin

Mouth big and terminal; teeth in both jaws differentiated into large and small; caudal fin truncate to slightly emarginate. Body dark dorsally, shading to silvery on sides and ventrally; a black spot at base of pectoral fin. **Similar species:** *A. japonicus* (25-30 soft dorsal rays; caudal fin S-shaped or almost truncate; mouth cavity yellow); *Paranibea semiluctuosa* (5 mental pores; back arched, mouth slightly inferior; lips thick and papillouse; lower jaw teeth uniform in size). **Habitat:** Coastal waters, mainly over muddy bottoms and in estuaries. **Fishery:** Consumed locally and exported in frozen form. Swim bladders (in dried, chilled and frozen form) exported to southeast Asian countries.

## Local Names

**Sua (Sin)**

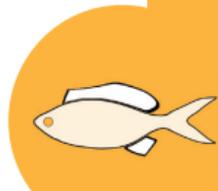
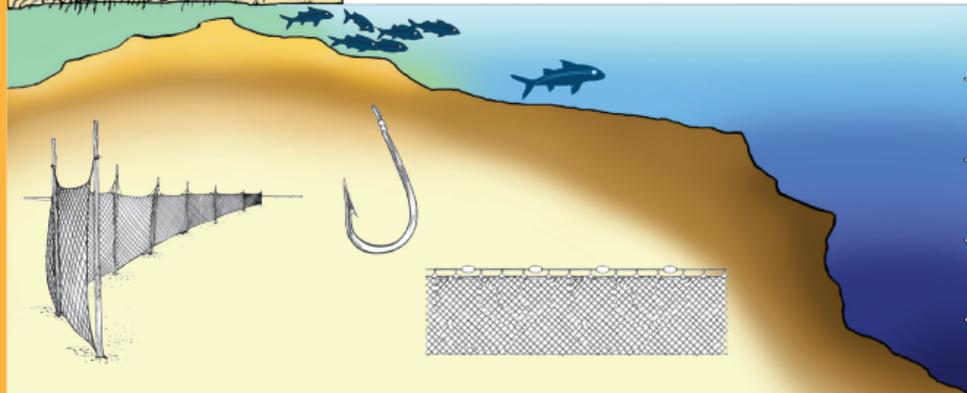
**Kir (Bal)**

**Note:** The above local names are used also for *A. japonicus*.



*Argirosomus heinii*

Photo: ©John E. Randall

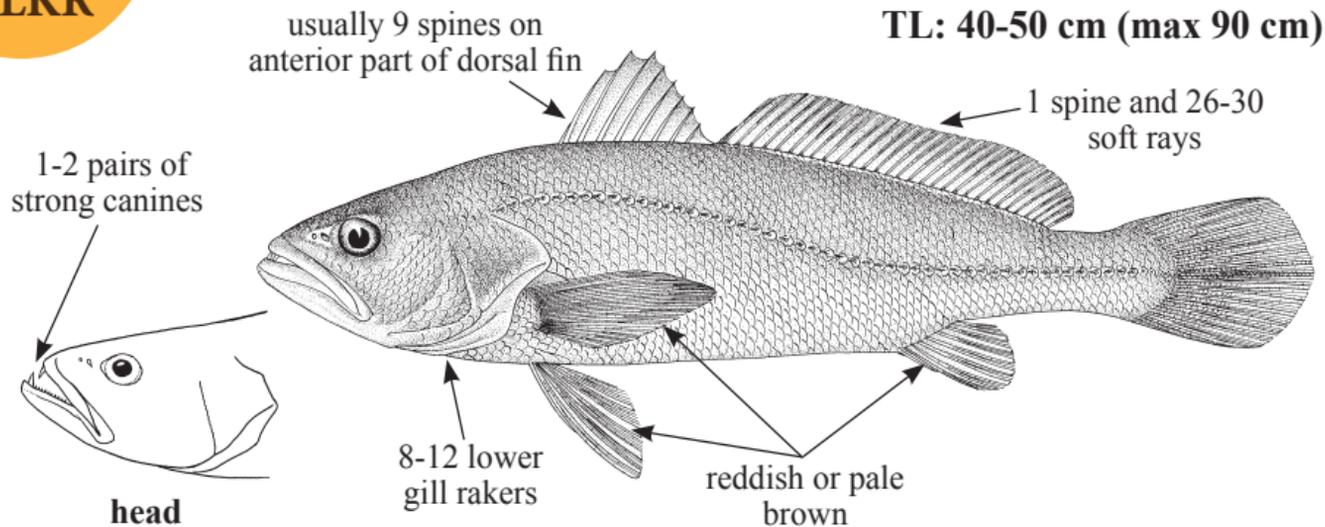


# SCIAENIDAE

# FAO (En): Tigertooth croaker

*Otolithes ruber* (Bloch & Schneider, 1801)

LKR



Body slender and cylindrical; mouth large and strongly oblique; lower jaw projecting; mental pores indistinct. Body brownish above, silvery with a golden sheen on flanks and belly, often with oblique dark streaks dorsally. **Similar species:** *O. cuvieri* (13-15 lower gill rakers; 10 spines on anterior part of dorsal fin; 1 spine and 29-32 soft rays on posterior part of dorsal fin; anal and paired fins yellowish; spinous dorsal fin edged in grey/black); other Indo-Pacific sciaenids (lack such strong canine teeth in both jaws). **Habitat:** Inhabits shallow coastal waters. Feeds mainly on fishes and prawns. **Fishery:** Consumed locally and exported in frozen form.

Local Names

**Mush-ka (Sin)**

**Pandasi, Mushka (Bal)**

**Note:** The above local names are used also for *O. cuvieri*.

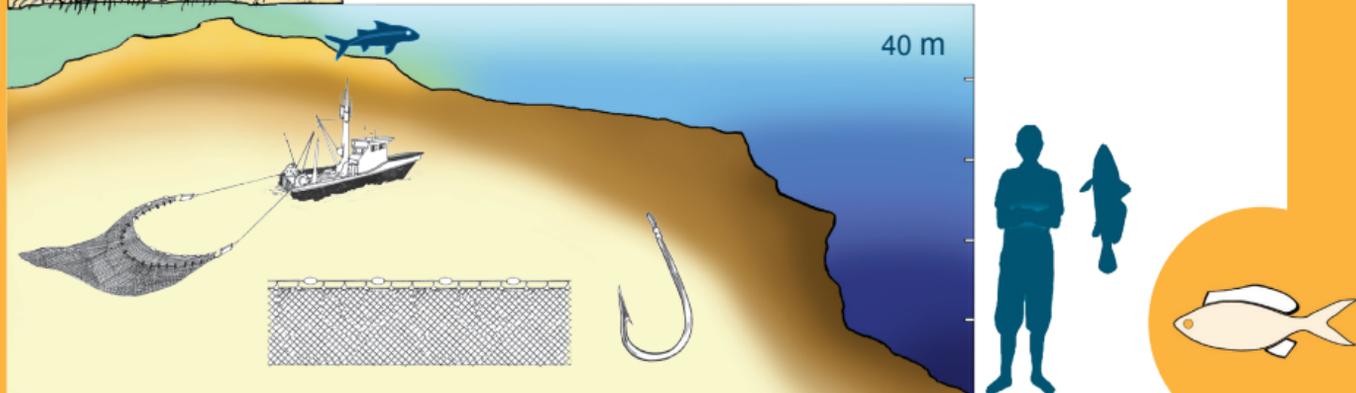


Photo: ©Muhammad Moazzam

*Otolithes ruber*

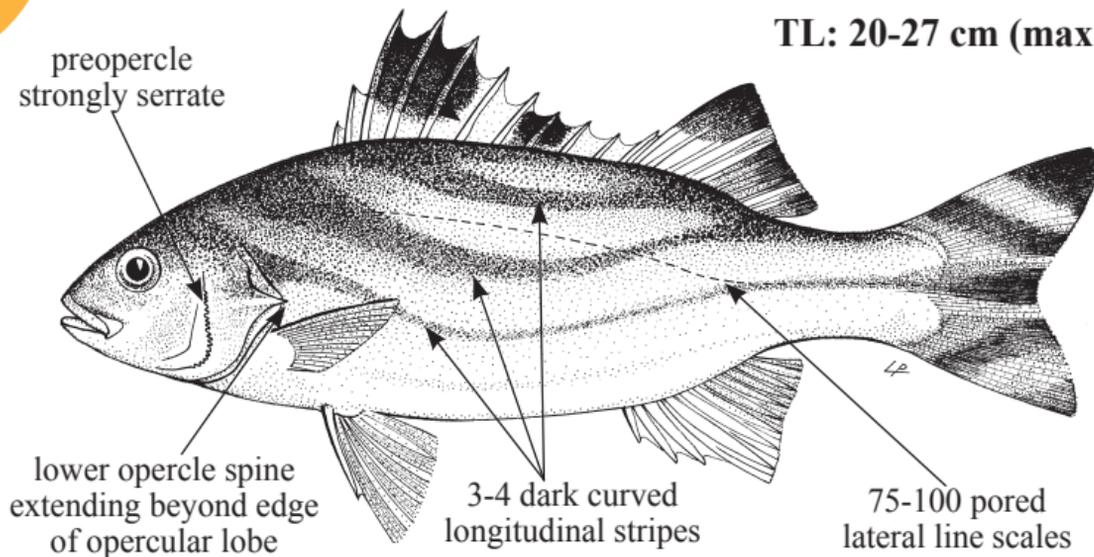
# TERAPONTIDAE

FAO (En): Jarbua terapon

*Terapon jarbua* (Forsskål, 1775)

TJB

TL: 20-27 cm (max 35 cm)



Body oblong moderately compressed laterally; 12-15 lower gill rakers. Body silvery greyish dorsally and silvery white ventrally; blackish blotches on dorsal fin; both caudal fin lobes with dark tips and a transverse band. **Similar species:** *T. theraps* (longitudinal body stripes straight; 14-17 lower gill rakers; 46-56 pored lateral line scales); *T. puta* (longitudinal body stripes straight and narrow; 18-24 lower gill rakers; 70-85 pored lateral line scales); *Pelates quadrilineatus* (caudal fin lobes plain; lower opercular spine not extending beyond edge of opercular lobe). **Habitat:** Inhabits coastal, brackish, and fresh waters. **Fishery:** Consumed locally; also used as raw material for fish meal.

Local Names

**Ghingra (Sin)**

**Adhi-kulai, Guarak, Kokita  
(Bal)**

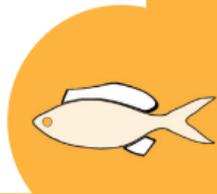
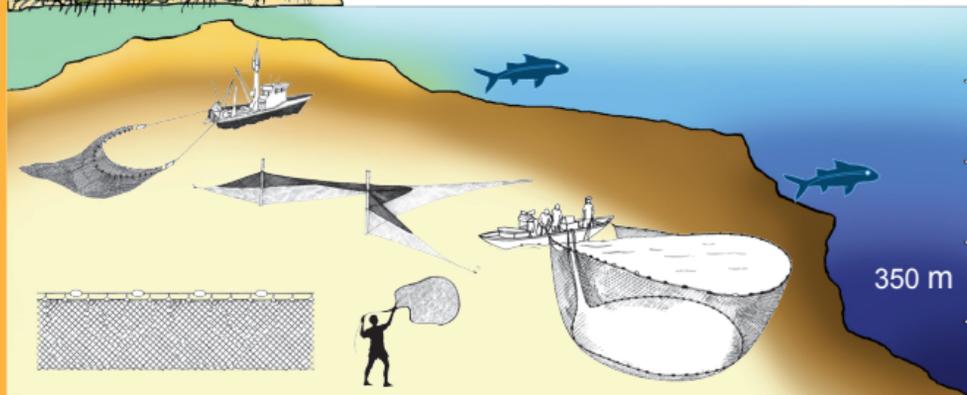
**Note:** “Ghingra” and “Adhi-kulai” are used also for other species of Terapontidae.



*Terapon jarbua*

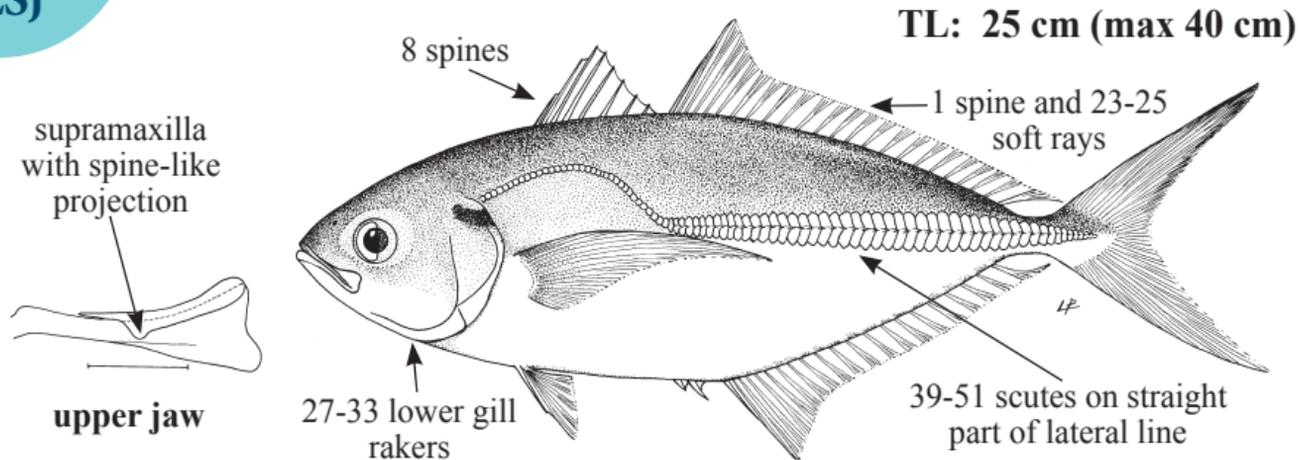


Photo collage



*Alepes djedaba* (Forsskal, 1775)

LSJ



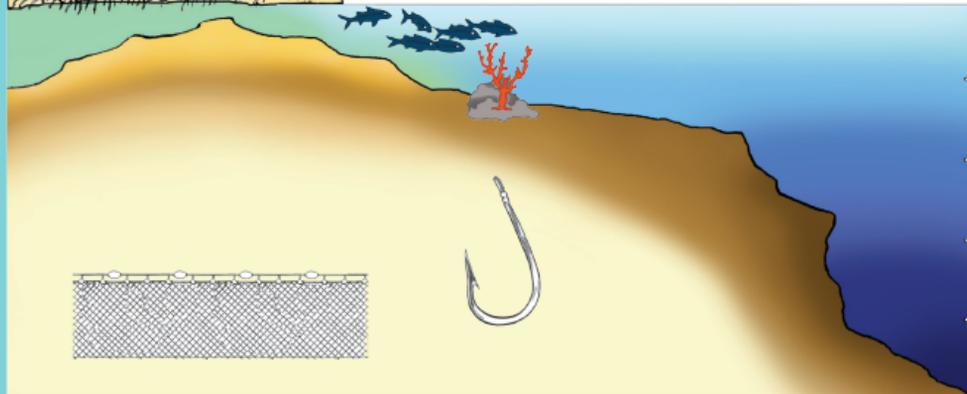
Body compressed; adipose eyelid well-developed only on posterior half of eye. Greyish green above, silvery to white below; a distinct black blotch on margin of opercle, bordered above by a smaller white spot. Caudal fin yellowish. **Similar species:** *A. vari* (scutes smaller, 48-69 in straight part of lateral line; 23-26 lower gill rakers; caudal fin dusky); *A. melanoptera* (first dorsal fin black; 17-24 lower gill rakers); *A. kleinii* (body oval, strongly compressed, with ventral profile distinctly more convex than dorsal profile; upper lobe of caudal fin longer than lower lobe in large adults); *Atule mate* (adipose eyelid completely covering eye except for a vertical slit centred on pupil; terminal dorsal and anal fin rays finlet-like in adults). **Habitat:** Adults form large schools near inshore reefs. **Fishery:** Consumed locally and exported in frozen form.

## Local Names

**Para, Bakka (Sin)**

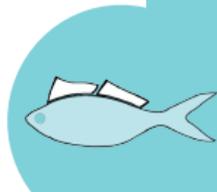
**Bakoi, Bako patar (Bal)**

**Note:** The above local names are used for all *Alepes* species occurring in the area.



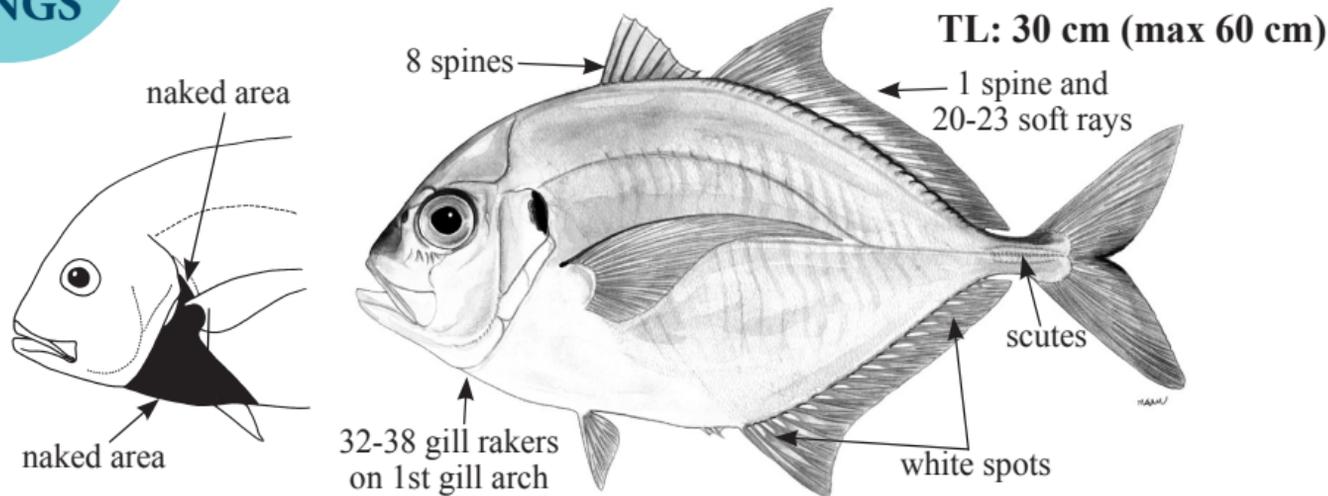
*Alepes djedaba*

Photo: ©Paul L. Fanning



*Carangoides malabaricus* (Bloch & Schneider, 1801)

NGS



Body strongly compressed, almost ovate; tongue greyish brown to brown. **Similar species:** *C. talamparoides* (27-31 gill rakers on 1st gill arch; tongue white to pale grey); *C. caeruleopinnatus* (21-27 gill rakers on 1st gill arch; area anteriorly just above pectoral fin base usually completely scaled); *C. chrysophrys* (21-26 gill rakers on 1st gill arch; 18-20 soft dorsal rays); *C. hedlandensis* (20-27 gill rakers; distinct "bump" in the interorbital region; lobe of 2nd dorsal fin longer than head length and, in mature males, central rays of dorsal and anal fins elongate). **Habitat:** Frequents coral and rocky reefs but may also be found in shallow sandy bays (mainly the juveniles). Feeds on crustaceans, small squids, and fishes. **Fishery:** Consumed locally.

## Local Names

**Patal, Kak-kar, Kak-kawan (Sin)**

**Pattar, Kak-kawan (Bal)**

**Note:** The above local names are used for all *Carangoides* species occurring in the area.

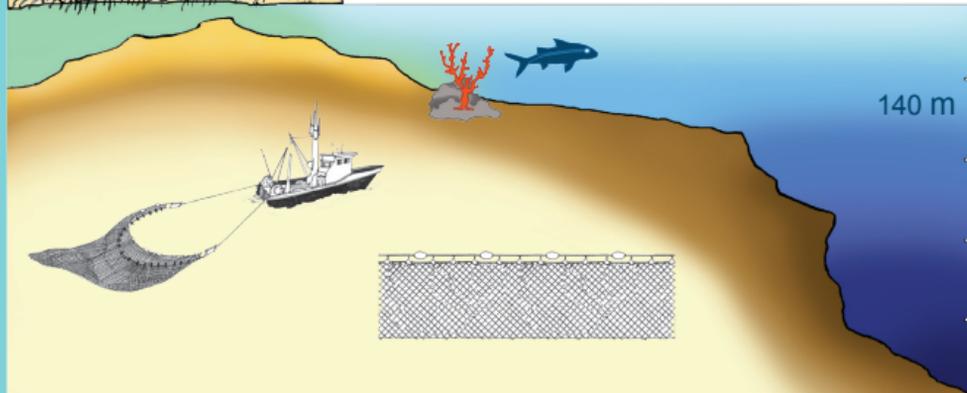
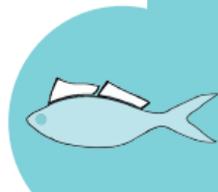


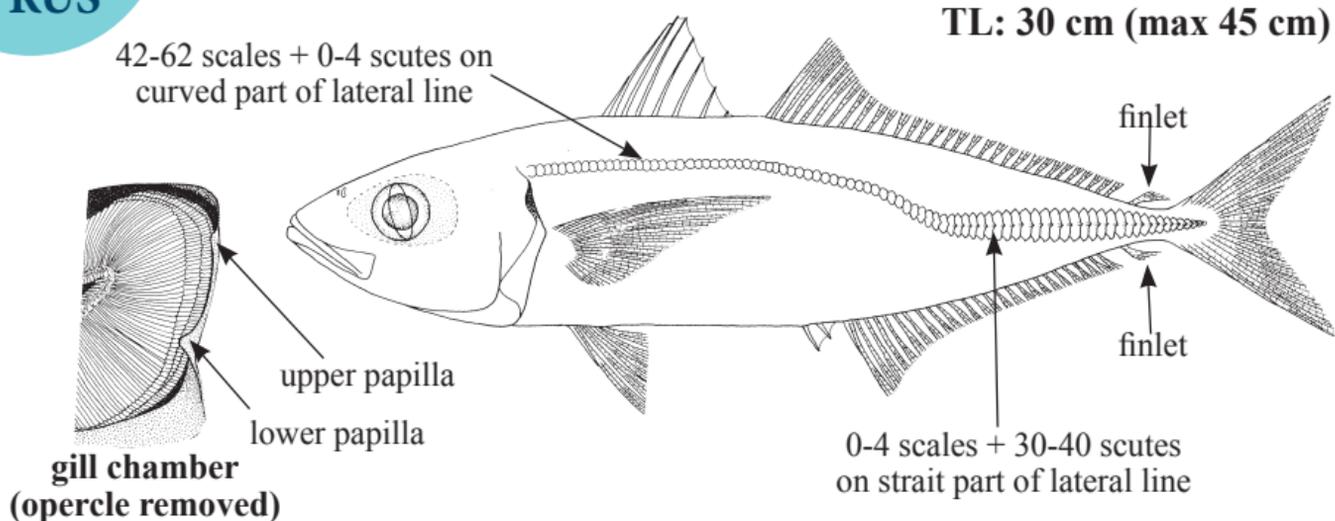
Photo: ©Hamid Badar Osmany

*Carangoides malabaricus*



*Decapterus russelli* (Rüppell, 1830)

RUS



Body elongate, moderately slender and slightly compressed. Bluish green above, silvery below; caudal fin hyaline to dusky brown. **Similar species:** *D. macrosoma* (straight part of lateral line with 14-29 scales; scutes in straight part of lateral line much smaller in height); *D. muroadsi* (5-15 scales on strait part of lateral line; oral valve at symphysis of upper jaw white); *D. kurroides* and *D. tabl* (caudal fin red); *Atule mate* (no papillae on shoulder girdle. **Habitat:** Adults forming large schools in deep water, but occasionally inshore in sheltered bays in small to large groups. **Fishery:** Consumed locally; exported in frozen form and also as raw material for fish meal.

## Local Names

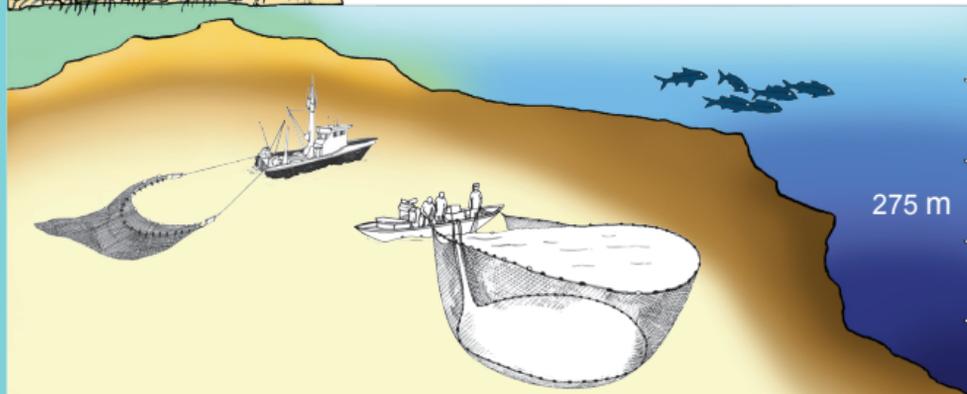
**Seem, Chumma (Sin)**

**Seem, Chumma (Bal)**

**Note:** The above local names are used for all *Decapterus* species occurring in the area.



Photo: ©Hamid Badar Osmany

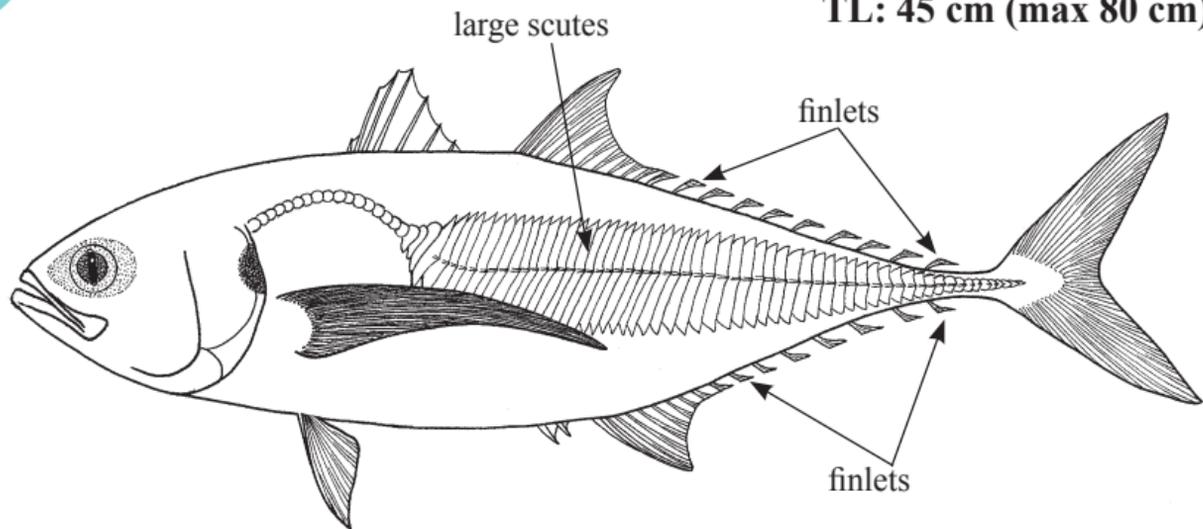


*Decapterus russelli*

*Megalaspis cordyla* (Linnaeus, 1758)

HAS

TL: 45 cm (max 80 cm)



Body elongate, subcylindrical, a little compressed posteriorly, and caudal peduncle strongly compressed with a marked medial keel; Head and body bluish grey to green dorsally, sides and belly silvery; large black opercular spot; dorsal and anal fins pale to yellow, distally dusky; pectoral and pelvic fins pale, with upper half dusky; caudal fin dark. **Similar species:** No other species of Carangidae has the combination of lateral line with very large scutes and posterior soft dorsal and anal fin rays consisting of a series of detached finlets. **Habitat:** A pelagic, schooling species. Feeds primarily on other fishes. **Fishery:** Consumed locally and also as raw material for fish meal.

Local Names

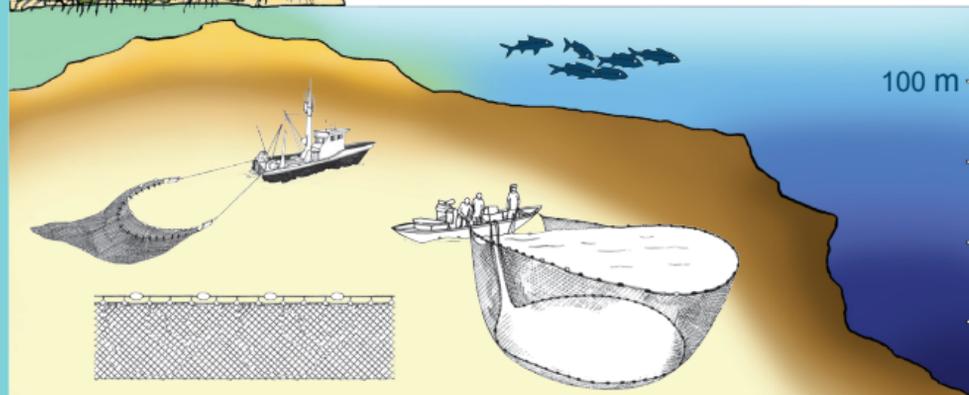
**Bindol, Budki, Binday-wal (Sin)**

**Dar-dumb (Bal)**



*Megalaspis cordyla*

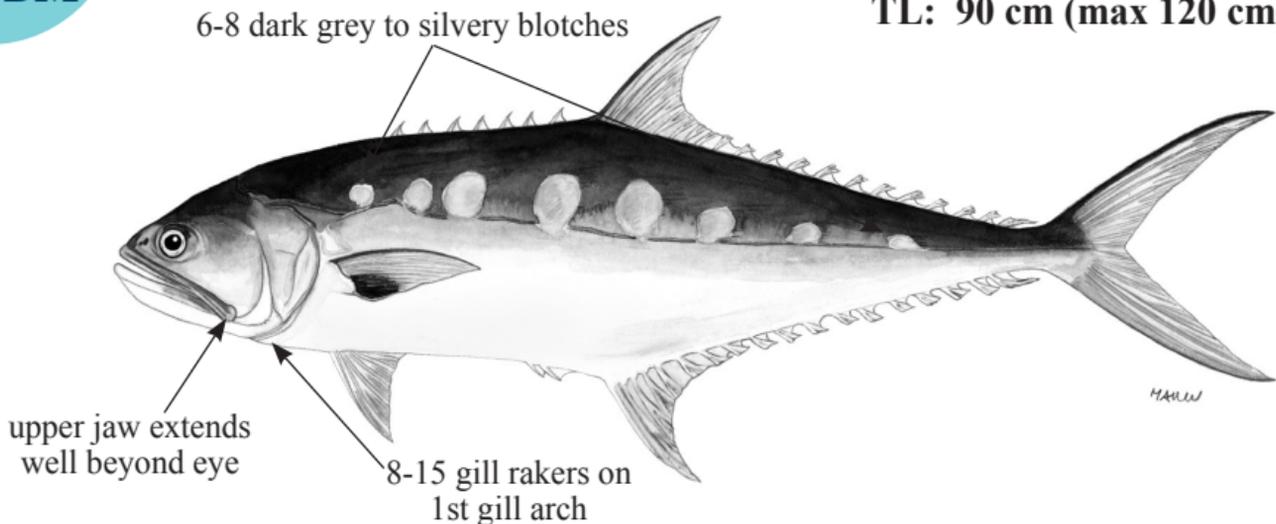
Photo: ©Paul L. Fanning



*Scomberoides commersonnianus* Lacepède, 1801

OBM

TL: 90 cm (max 120 cm)



Body oblong to elliptical, strongly compressed. Head and body dusky green to bluish dorsally, grey to silvery below, large individuals often golden, especially ventrally. **Similar species:** *S. tala* (upper jaw extends only slightly beyond posterior margin of eye; sides of adults with 4-8 vertically elongate plumbeous blotches, most of which intersect lateral line) *S. lysan* and *S. tol* (gill rakers on first gill arch 21-27; distal half of dorsal fin lobe abruptly and heavily pigmented). **Habitat:** Swims in small groups and usually frequents reefs and offshore islands. the spines of the first dorsal and anal fins are venomous and capable of inflicting painful stings. **Fishery:** Consumed locally.

## Local Names

**Aal, Saram (Sin)**

**Saram, Saram gazdani,  
Saram aanam (Bal)**

**Note:** The above local names are used also for other *Scomberoides* species occurring in the area.

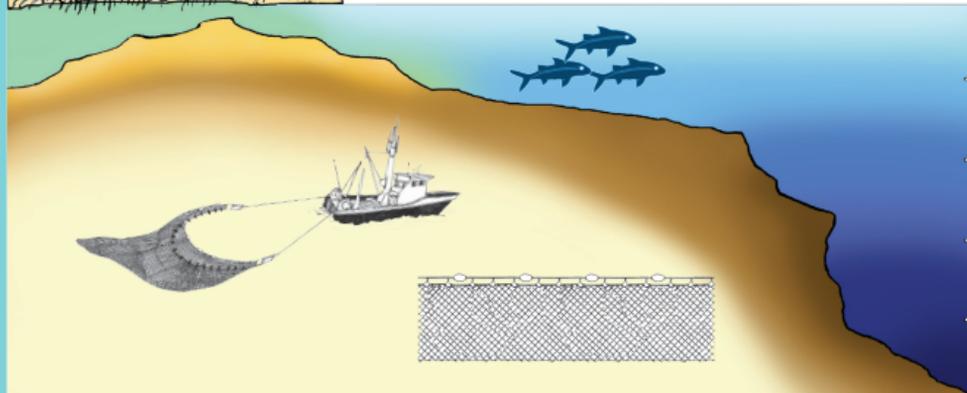
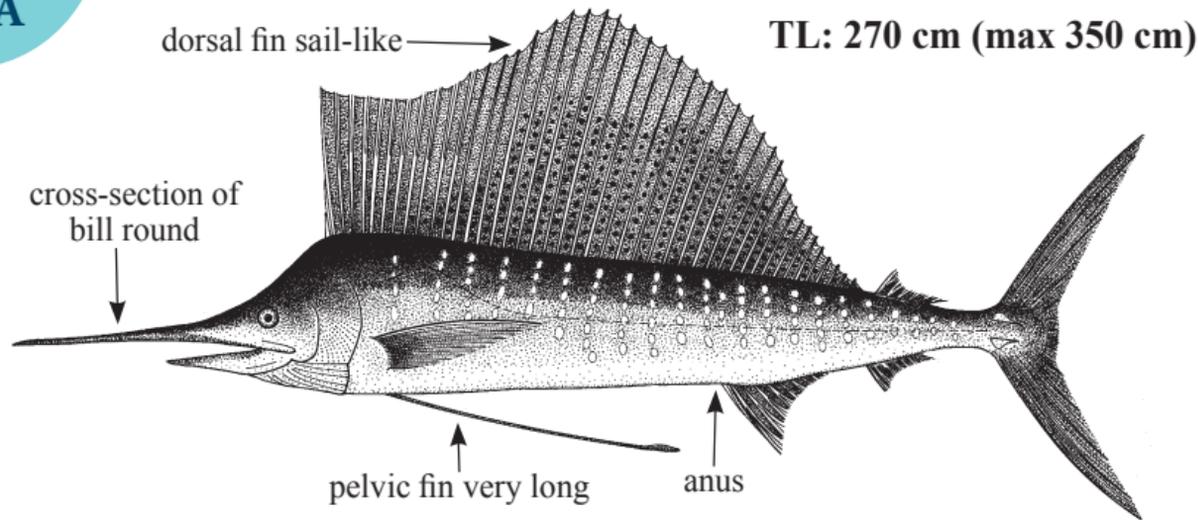


Photo collage

*Istiophorus platypterus* (Shaw, 1792)

SFA



Body dark blue dorsally and silvery white ventrally; first dorsal fin membrane blue-black, with scattered small, round black dots; about 20 vertical bars consisting of several small pale blue spots on side of body. **Similar species:** No other istiophorid occurring in the region has sail-like first dorsal fin and very long pelvic fins; *Xiphias gladius* (cross-section of bill flat-oval; pelvic fins absent). **Habitat:** Oceanic, epipelagic, and highly migratory. Most densely distributed in waters close to coasts and islands. Feeds on a wide variety of fishes, crustaceans, and cephalopods. The bill is used for attacking prey but also to settle territorial disputes. **Fishery:** Consumed locally and also exported in chilled, salted and dried form. It is highly regarded as sportfish.

Local Names

**Ghora (Sin)**

**Asp, Hasp (Bal)**

**Note:** The above local names are used also for other istiophorids occurring in the area.

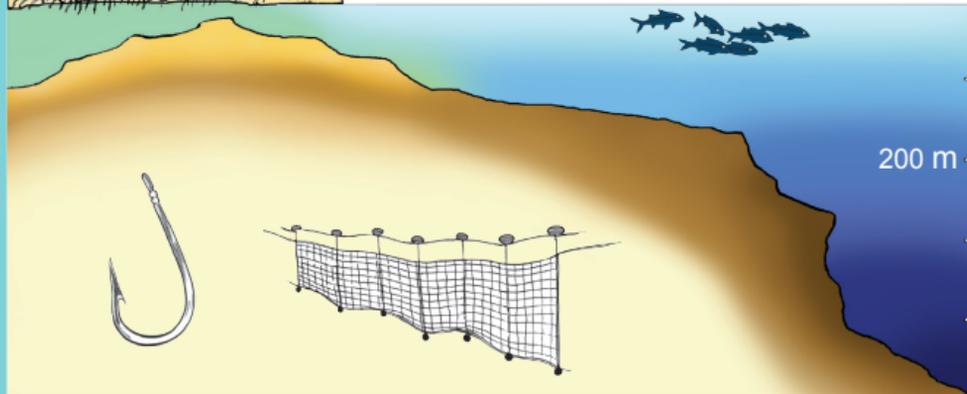


Photo collage

*Istiophorus platypterus*

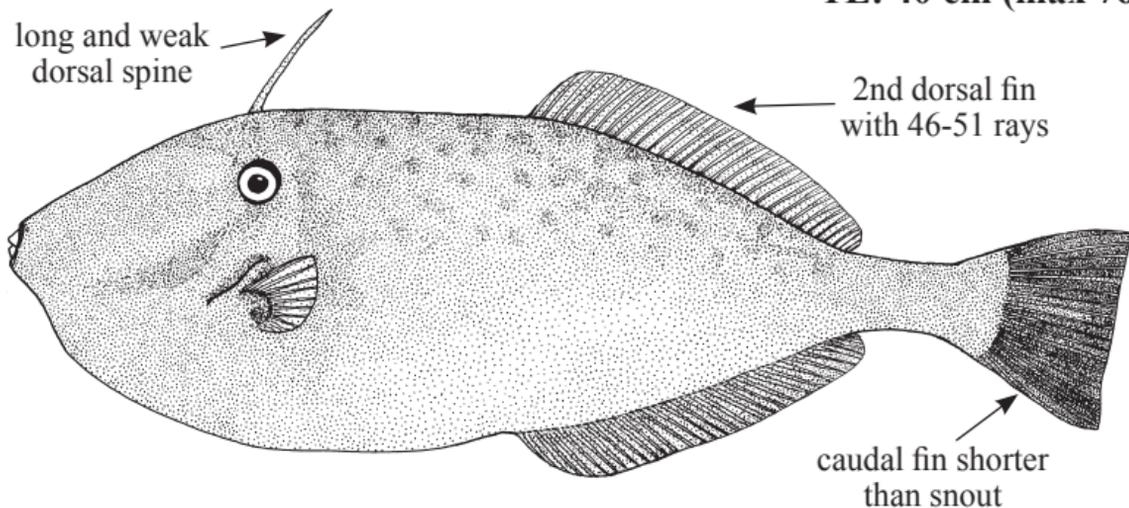
# MONACANTHIDAE

# FAO (En): Unicorn leatherjacket filefish

*Aluterus monoceros* (Linnaeus, 1758)

ALM

TL: 40 cm (max 76 cm)



Body moderately deep and compressed, with smooth leathery skin. Uniform light grey to sandy or with darker blotches and spots; fins yellowish with caudal more dusky. **Similar species:** *A. scriptus* (caudal fin longer than snout; longitudinal blue lines and spots on sides) *Stephanolepis diaspros* (1st dorsal fin spine originating over posterior half of eye; 2nd dorsal fin with 32-33 rays). **Habitat:** Semi-pelagic on the continental shelf down to depths of 80 m. Juveniles are pelagic, seen under floating objects. Feeds on bottom-living organisms. **Fishery:** Exported in frozen form.

## Local Names

**Chappal, Kako, Kookh,  
Sapna (Sin)**

**Pokki, Khar, Har (Bal)**

**Note:** The above local names are used for all Monacanthidae species occurring in the area.

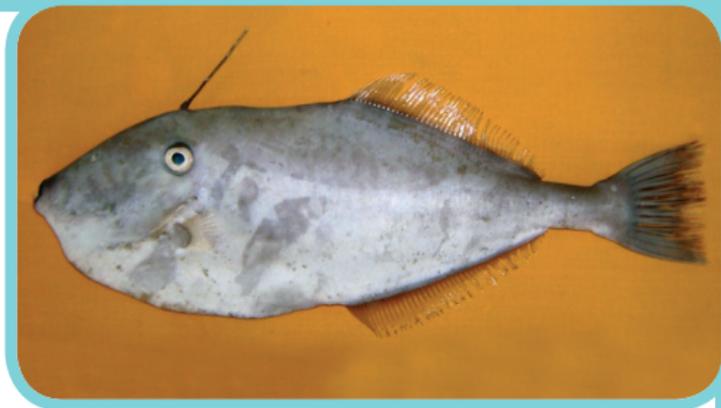
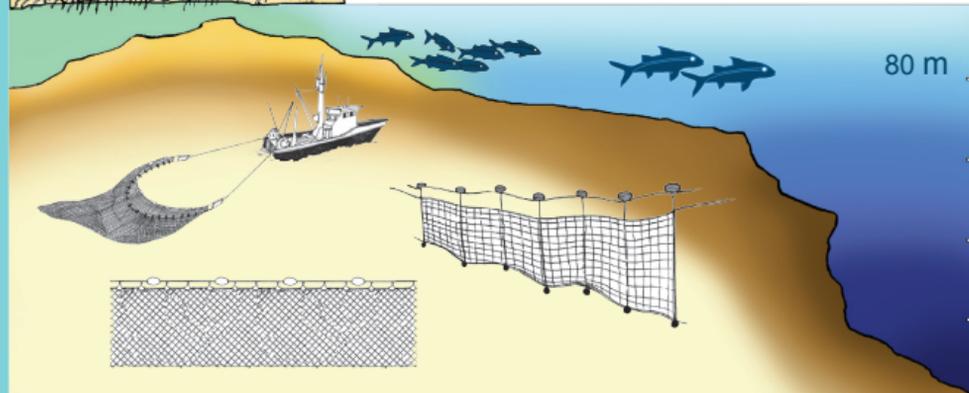
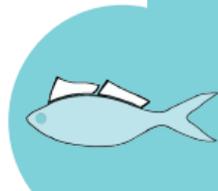


Photo: ©Hamid Badar Osmany

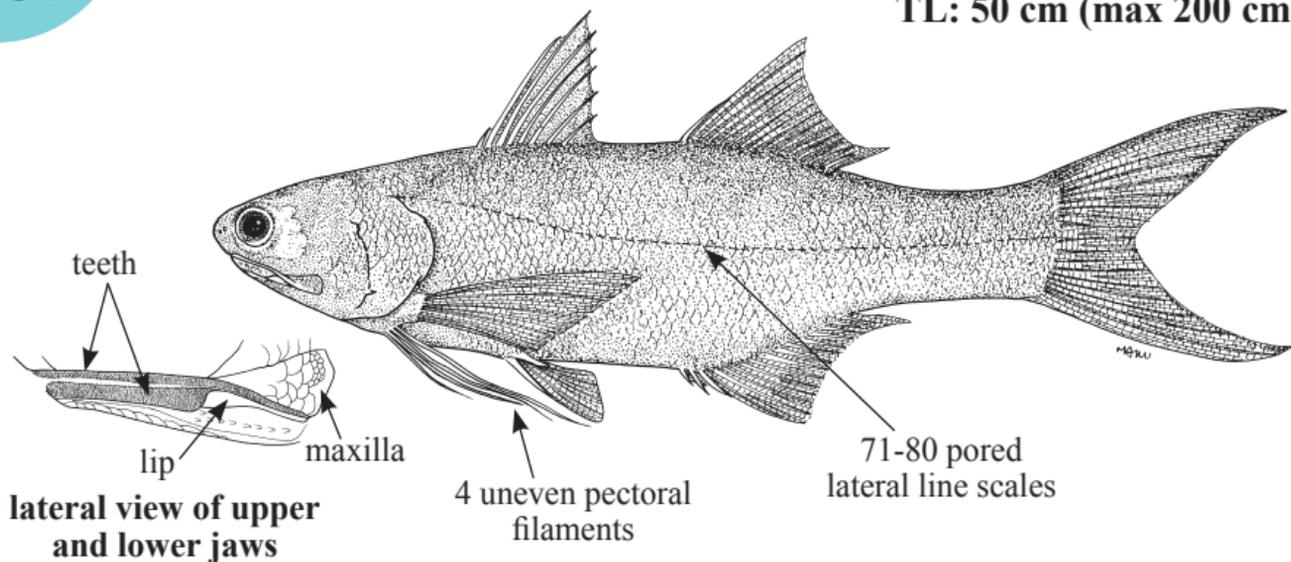
*Aluterus monoceros*



*Eleutheronema tetradactylum* (Shaw, 1804)

FOT

TL: 50 cm (max 200 cm)



Pectoral fin insertion well below midline of body; 6-18 gill rakers on 1st gill arch. Body silvery green above, lighter below; fins grey or with yellow tinge, dusky and darkened marginally; pectoral filaments white or creamy. **Similar species:** In all other polynemid species the lower lip extends to anterior part of jaw. **Habitat:** Generally occurs on continental shelves on muddy and sandy substrata, and frequently enters brackish waters, especially as juveniles. They feed on prawns and fish with occasional polychaetes. **Fishery:** Consumed locally.

## Local Names

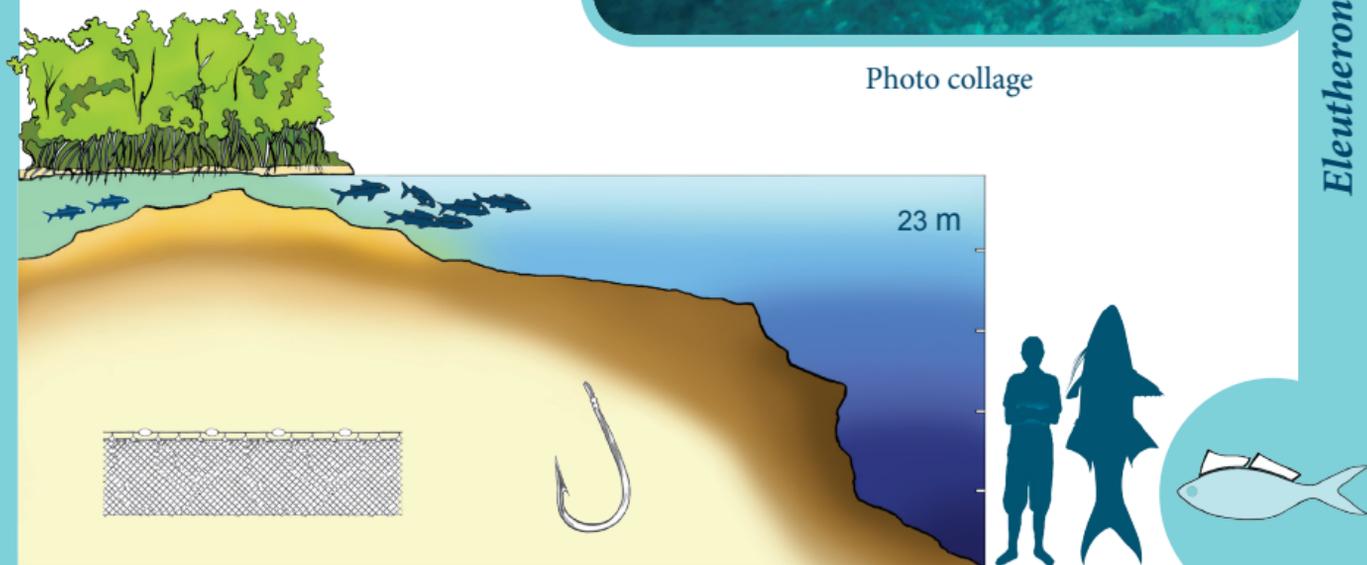
**Rawans, Seeri, Photani (Sin)**

**Gwanz (Bal)**

**Note:** The above local names are used also for other polynemids occurring in the area.

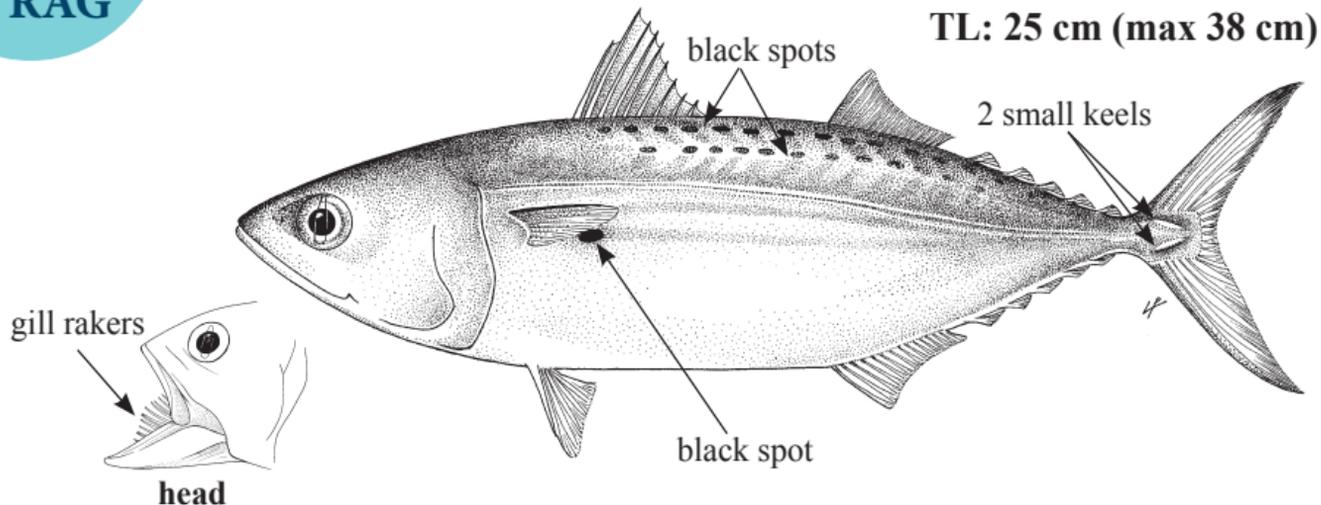


Photo collage



*Rastrelliger kanagurta* (Cuvier, 1816)

RAG



Body moderately deep; second dorsal and anal fins each followed by 5 or 6 finlets. Back blue-green, flanks silver with a golden tint dorsal fins yellowish with black tips, caudal and pectoral fins yellowish. **Similar species:** *Auxis* and *Scomber* species (a conspicuous pattern of oblique zig-zag or wavy dark lines on back. Furthermore, *Auxis* has a median keel between the pair of small keels on each side of caudal peduncle; 8 dorsal and 7 anal finlets); Other species of Scombridae (first and second dorsal fins close together; 7-10 finlets behind dorsal and anal fins). **Habitat:** Pelagic, mainly in coastal waters. Feeds primarily on plankton, mainly larval crustaceans **Fishery:** Consumed locally and also exported in frozen form.

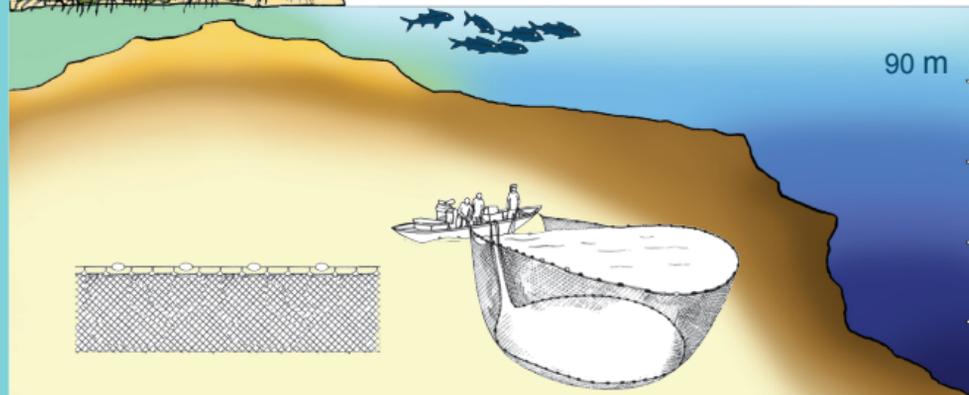
Local Names

**Bangra, Seem (Sin)**

**Bangra, Seem (Bal)**



Photo: ©Otakar Seycek



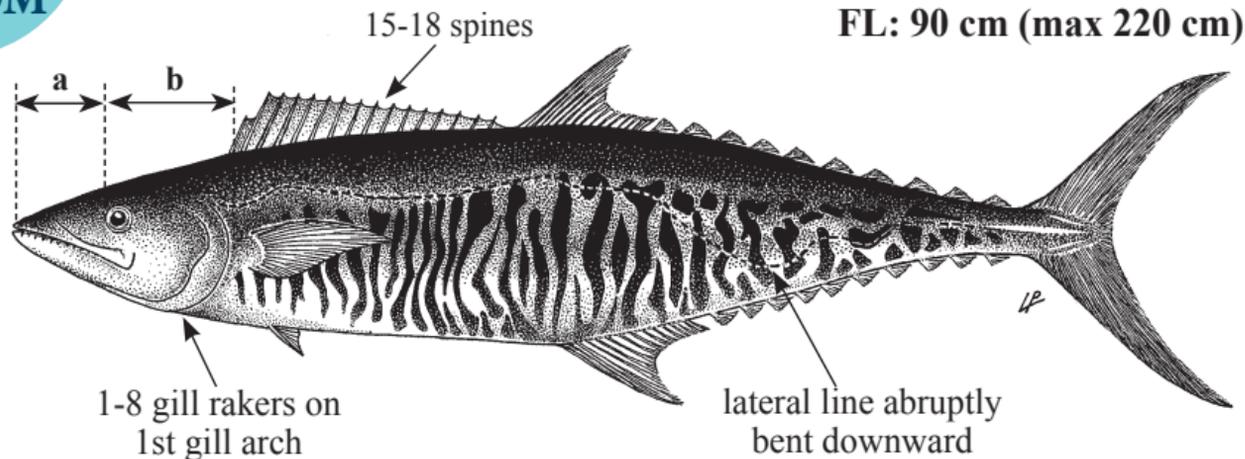
*Rastrelliger kanagurta*

# SCOMBRIDAE

## FAO (En): Narrow-barred Spanish mackerel

*Scomberomorus commerson* (Lacepède, 1800)

COM



Body elongate, moderately compressed; teeth in jaws strong, compressed, almost triangular; snout (a) shorter than rest of head (b). Back iridescent blue-grey, sides silver with bluish reflections, marked with numerous thin, wavy vertical bands. **Similar species:** *S. guttatus* and *S. koreanus* (dark spots along sides of body and lateral line almost straight); *S. lineolatus* (horizontal narrow black lines along sides of body); *Acanthocybium solandri* (no gillrakers; 23-27 dorsal fin spines; snout as long as rest of the head); *Sarda orientalis* (8-13 gill rakers on 1st gill arch; dark longitudinal stripes on upper part of body). **Habitat:** A pelagic fish, inhabiting coastal waters at depths between 15-200 m. Feeds on small schooling fishes, such as sardines and anchovies. **Fishery:** Consumed locally and also exported in chilled and frozen form.

Local Names

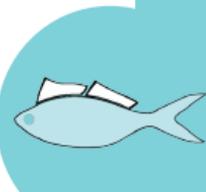
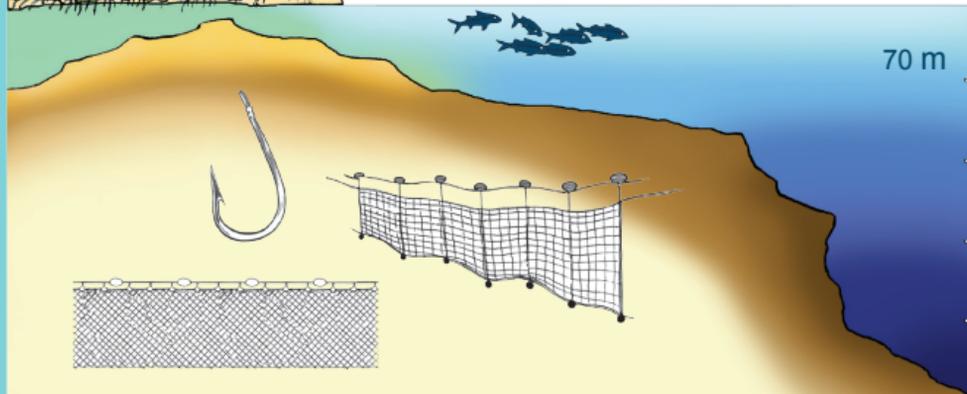
**Ghore (Sin)**

**Ghore (Bal)**

**Note:** The above local names are used only for *S. commerson*.



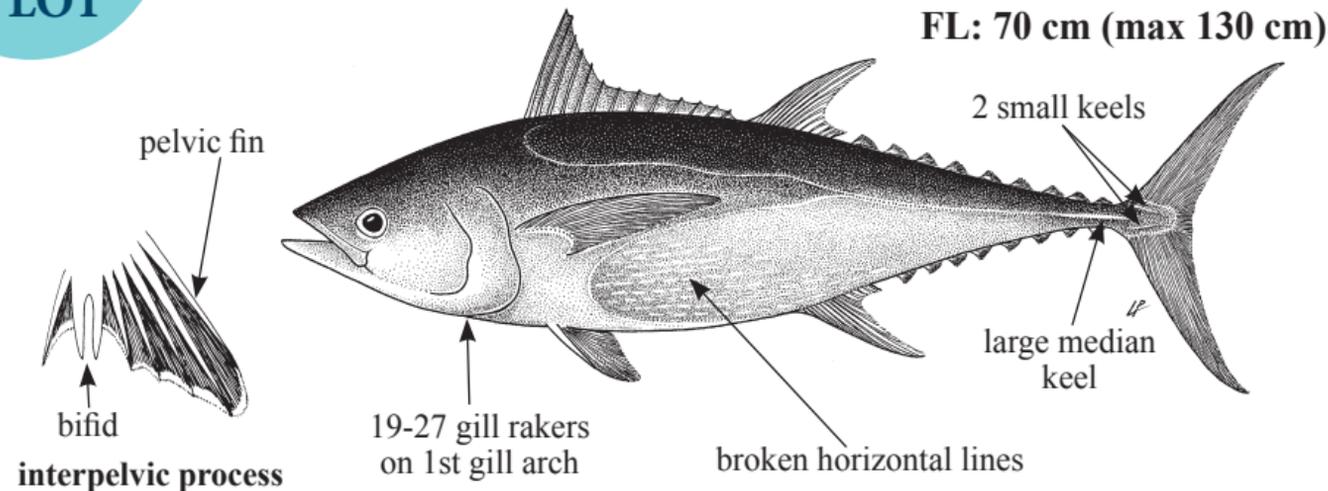
Photo: ©Paul L. Fanning



*Scomberomorus commerson*

*Thunnus tonggol* (Bleeker, 1851)

LOT



Two dorsal fins, separated only by a narrow interspace; ventral surface of liver not striated. Back dark blue or black, lower sides and belly silvery white; dorsal and anal finlets yellow with greyish margins. **Similar species:** *T. albacares* (2nd dorsal and anal fins greatly elongate; vertical broken lines on belly); *T. obesus* (ventral surface of liver striated; finlets bright yellow edged with black); *Auxis* spp. (dorsal fins widely separated; interpelvic process single); *Katsuwonus pelamis* (dark longitudinal stripes on belly; 53-63 gill rakers on 1st gill arch); *Euthynnus affinis* (wavy stripes on back; 2 or more dark spots between pelvic and pectoral fins). **Habitat:** Pelagic, mainly in coastal waters. **Fishery:** Consumed locally and also exported in chilled, salted and dried form.

Local Names

**Dawan (Sin)**

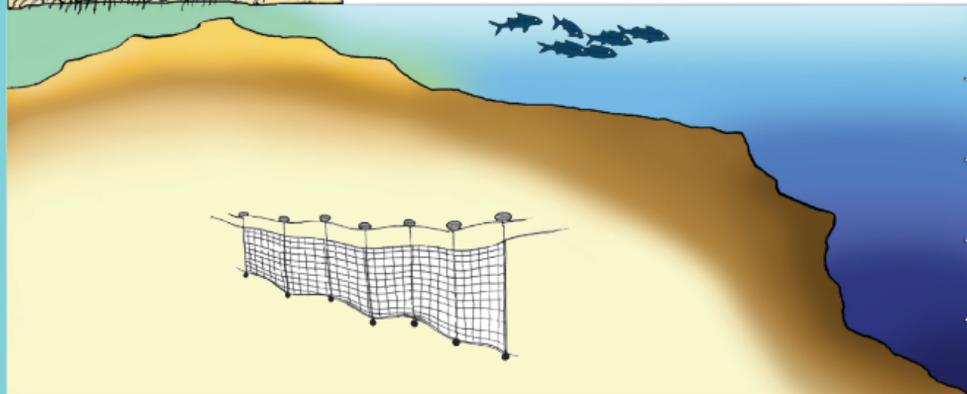
**Aahoor (Bal)**

**Note:** The above local names are used only for *T. tonggol*.



*Thunnus tonggol*

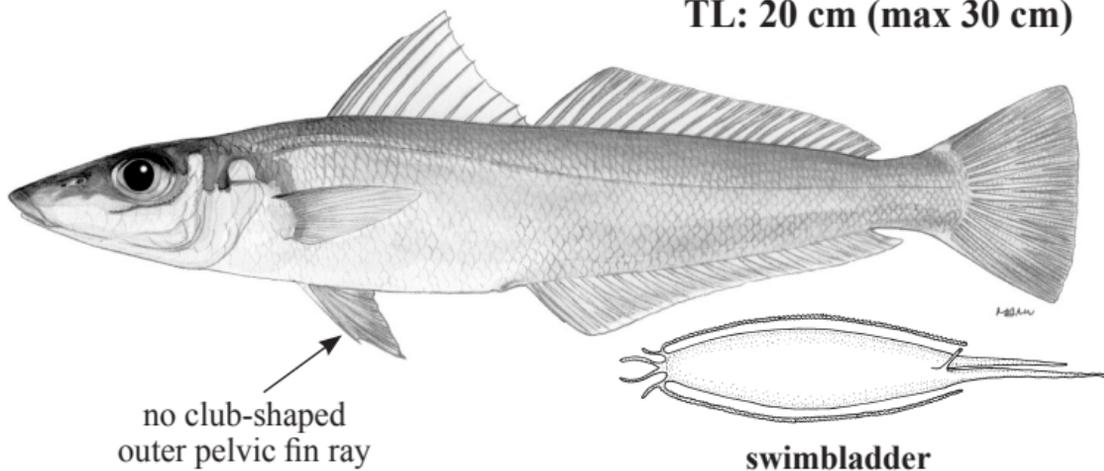
Photo: ©Muhammad Moazzam



*Sillago sihama* (Forsskål, 1775)

ILS

TL: 20 cm (max 30 cm)



Swimbladder divided posteriorly into 2 tapering extensions projecting below vertebral column into tail musculature. Body light tan, silvery yellow-brown, sandy-brown, or honey coloured; paler brown to silvery white below; a midlateral, silvery, longitudinal band normally present. **Similar species:** *S. chondropus* (outer pelvic fin ray thickened to form a club-like structure); *Sillaginopsis panijus* (head greatly flattened, eyes small, covered with adipose tissue; second dorsal fin spine filamentous). Other *Sillago* species (swimbladder with a single posterior extension below vertebral column and entering the tail section). **Habitat:** A nearshore species inhabiting shallow water along beaches, sandbars, mangrove creeks, and estuaries. **Fishery:** Consumed locally and exported in frozen form.

## Local Names

**Shoor, Ladyfish, Bhambore (Sin)**

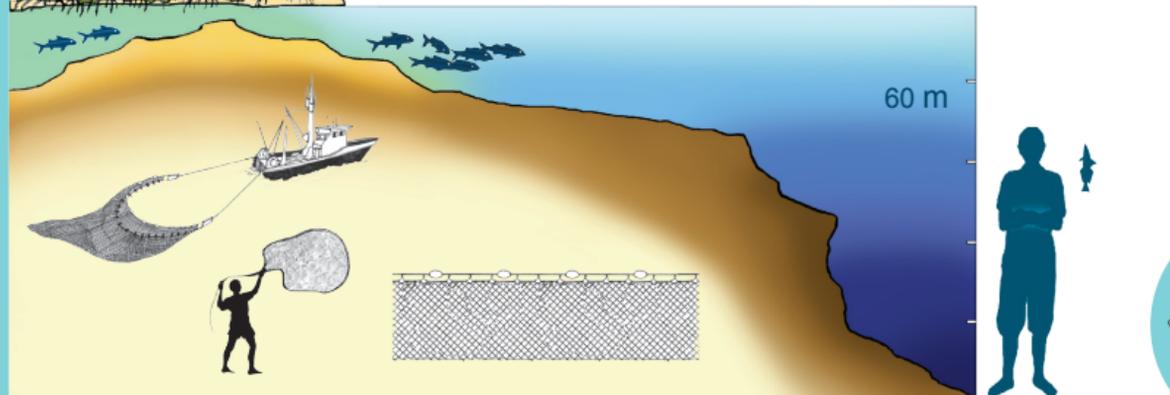
**Hashoor (Bal)**

**Note:** The above local names are used for all Sillaginidae occurring in the area.



*Sillago sihama*

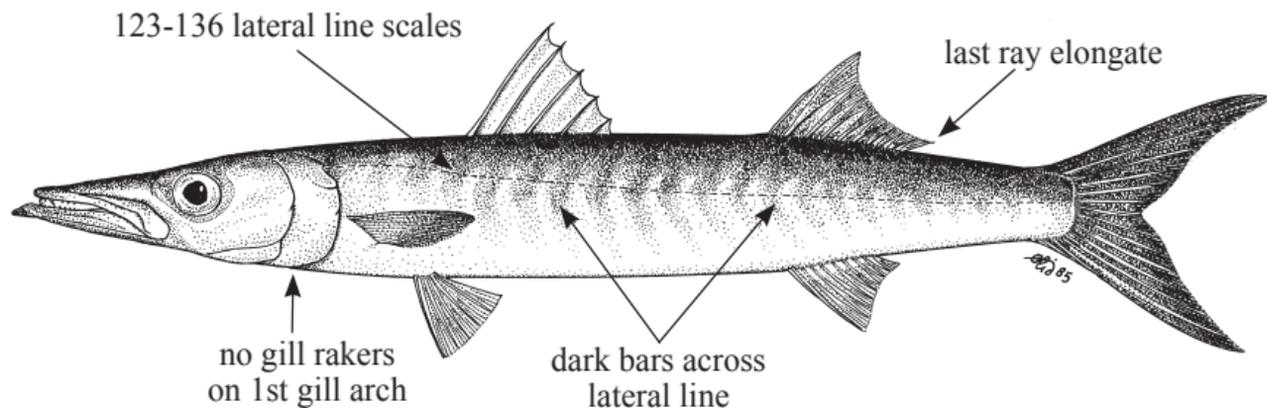
Photo collage



*Sphyraena putnamae* Jordan & Seale, 1905

BAN

TL: 60 cm (max 90 cm)



Upper and lower gill arch with rough platelets which lack distinct spines. Caudal fin blackish without white tips. **Similar species:** *Sphyraena barracuda* (75-85 lateral line scales; dark bars not across lateral line; white tips on caudal fin); *S. jello* and *S. genie* (dark bars crossing lateral line oblique in upper half, but nearly vertical in lower half; last ray of second dorsal fin not elongate; caudal fin yellowish in the former and blackish in the latter species); Other *Sphyraena* species (1-2 gill rakers or with spinous platelets on 1st gill arch). **Habitat:** Inhabits bays and turbid inner lagoons. Nocturnally active occurring in relatively large schools during the day. **Fishery:** Consumed locally.

Local Names

**Kund (Sin)**

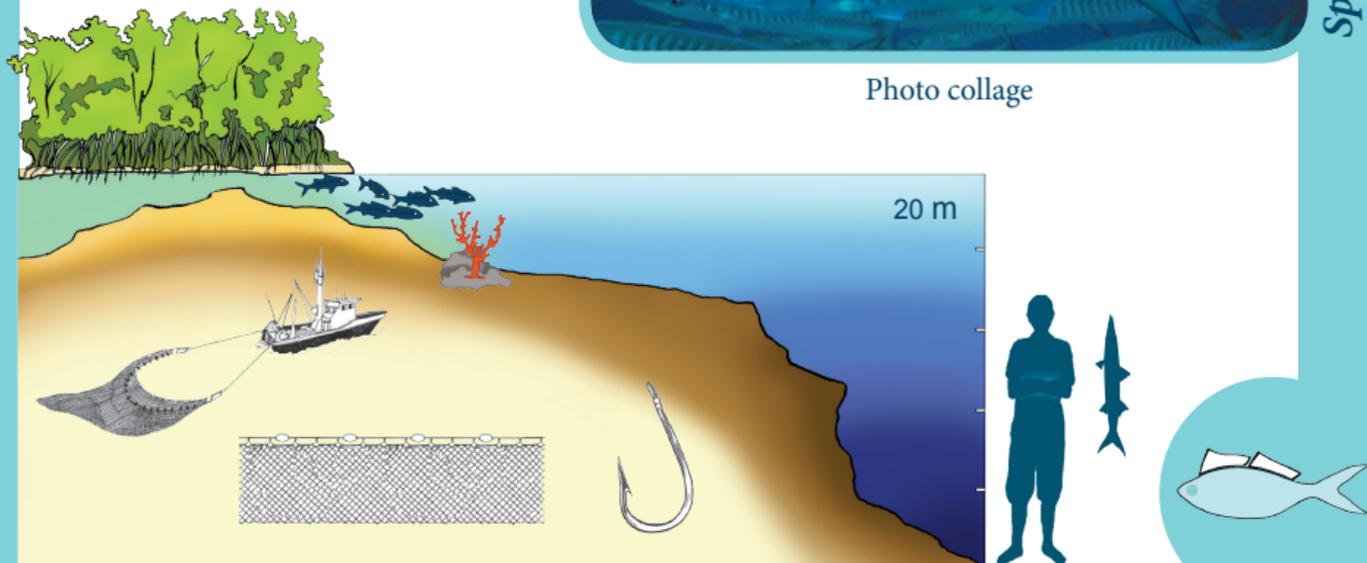
**Kund (Bal)**

**Note:** The above local names are used for all *Sphyraena* species occurring in the area.



*Sphyraena putnamae*

Photo collage



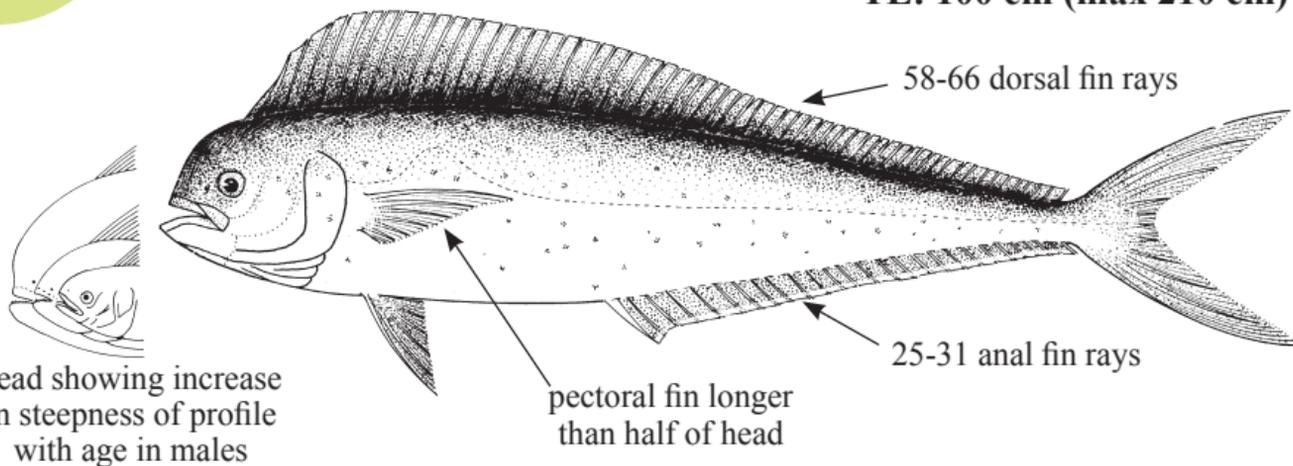
# CORYPHAENIDAE

FAO (En): Common dolphinfish

*Coryphaena hippurus* Linnaeus, 1758

DOL

TL: 100 cm (max 210 cm)



head showing increase in steepness of profile with age in males

pectoral fin longer than half of head

25-31 anal fin rays

58-66 dorsal fin rays

Greatest body depth in adults less than 25% of SL. Small oval tooth patch on tongue. Back brilliant metallic blue-green in life, after death fading to grey with a green tinge; sides silvery with a golden sheen; rows of dark spots or golden blotches running below dorsal fin and lateral line. **Similar species:** *C. equiselis* (52-59 dorsal fin rays; greatest body depth in adults more than 25% of SL; tooth patch on tongue broad and trapezoidal, pectoral fins about half of head length). **Habitat:** Pelagic, inhabiting open waters but also approaching the coast; highly migratory. **Fishery:** Exported in salted dried form; a very highly appreciated sports fish.

Local Names

**Aab-rose (Sin)**

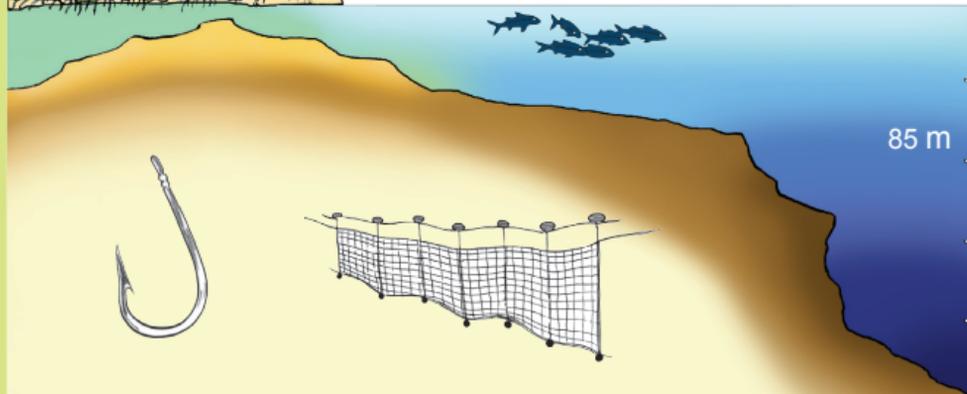
**Amrusk, Amlooshk (Bal)**

**Note:** The above local names are used for *C. equiselis* also occurring in the area.



*Coryphaena hippurus*

Photo: ©C. Cox, [www.mbara.org](http://www.mbara.org)

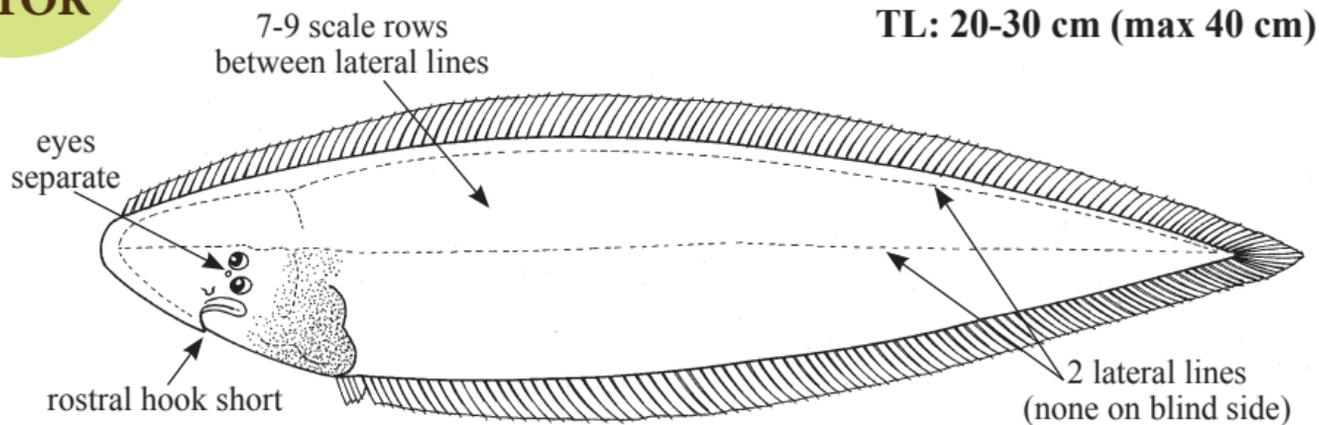


# CYNOGLOSSIDAE

# FAO (En): Largescale tonguesole

*Cynoglossus arel* (Bloch & Schneider, 1801)

YOR



Snout obtusely pointed; scales large, ctenoid on eyed side of body; cycloid on blind side. Eyed side uniform brown, with a dark patch on gill cover, blind side white. **Similar species:** *C. carpenteri* (eyed side with 3 lateral lines); *C. quadrilineatus*, *C. dispar*, *C. lachneri* (blind side with 2 lateral lines); *C. dubius* (blind side with one lateral line); *C. cynoglossus* (lower jaw with crenulate fleshy ridge; dorsolateral line usually undulating); *C. puncticeps* (irregular cross bands on eyed side); *Paraplagusia* spp. (lips on eyed side fringed). **Habitat:** Inhabits muddy and sandy bottoms on the continental shelf. Feeds mainly on bottom living invertebrates. **Fishery:** Consumed locally and exported in frozen form.

Local Names

**Chah-ail, Sole (Sin)**

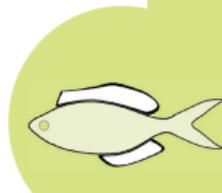
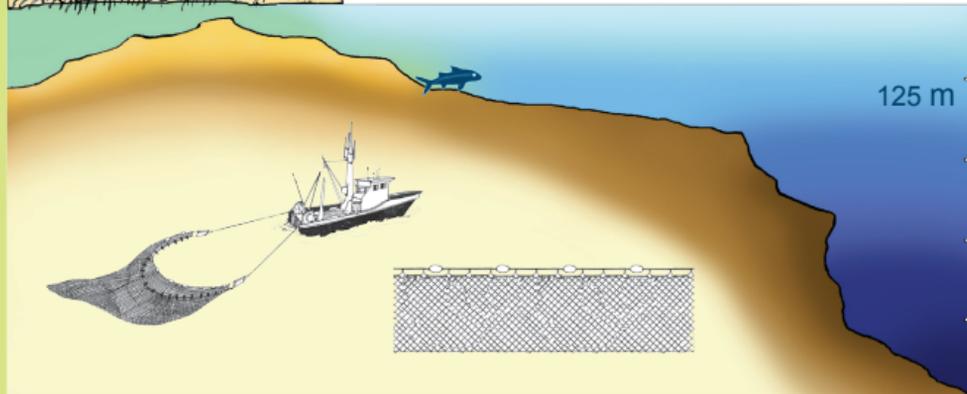
**Mundsar swasso, Zahmay  
swasso (Bal)**

**Note:** The above local names are used for all Cynoglossidae species occurring in the area.



*Cynoglossus arel*

Photo: ©Hamid Badar Osmany



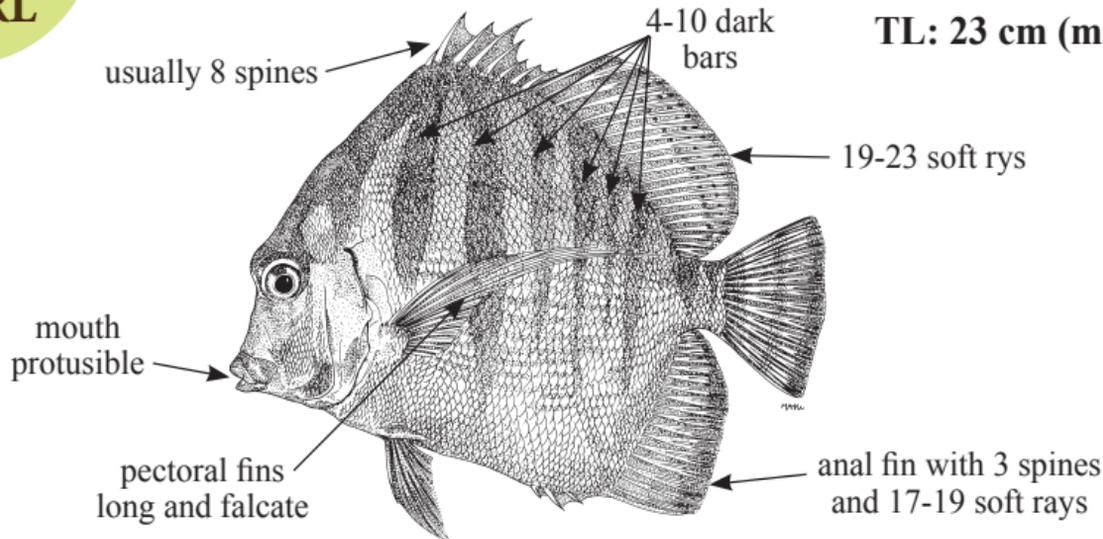
# DREPANEIDAE

# FAO (En): Concertina fish

*Drepane longimana* (Bloch & Schneider, 1801)

DRL

TL: 23 cm (max 50 cm)



Body oval and strongly compressed. Head and body silvery. Some specimens with front part of head dark and white lips. **Similar species:** *D. punctata* (usually 9 dorsal fin spines; 5-10 series of black spots arranged in vertical lines on upper half of body); *Tripterodon orbis* (pectoral fins short and rounded; mouth not protusible); *Platax* spp. (pectoral fins small; spines of dorsal fin increasing in length posteriorly); *Scatophagus argus* (4 anal spines; snout profile concave above snout). **Habitat:** Occurs on sand/mud bottoms, reefs, estuaries and mangroves. Feeds on benthic invertebrates. **Fishery:** Consumed locally.

## Local Names

**Pha-ran, Jalaibi (Sin)**

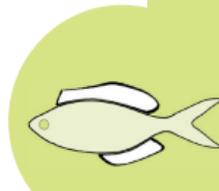
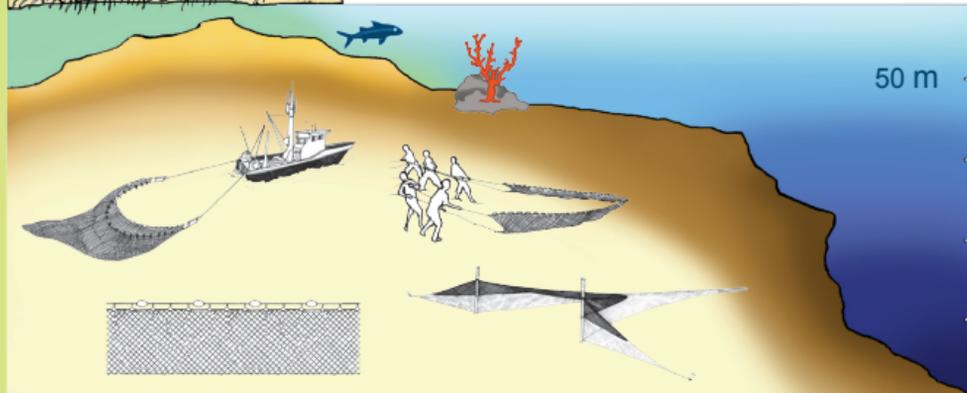
**Sarando (Bal)**

**Note:** The above local names are used also for *D. punctata*.



*Drepane longimana*

Photo collage



# MURAENESOCIDAE

FAO (En): Daggertooth pike conger

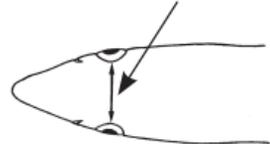
*Muraenesox cinereus* (Forsskål, 1775)

DPC

66-78 dorsal fin rays and 40-47 lateral line pores before level of anus, respectively

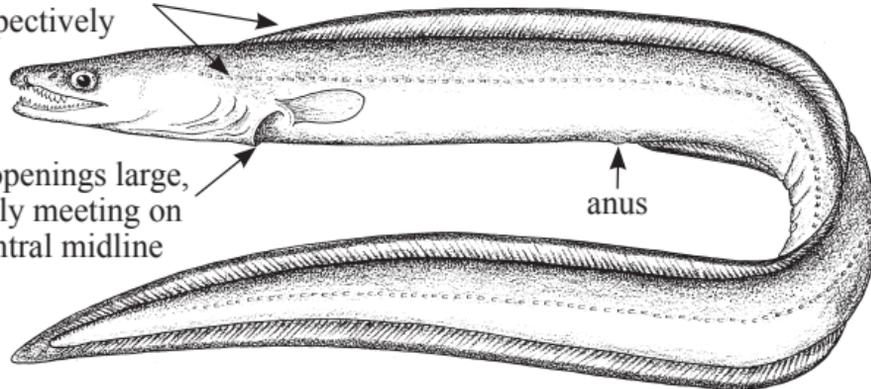
TL: 80 cm (max 220 cm)

interorbital width about 8 times in head length



dorsal view of head

gill openings large, nearly meeting on ventral midline



anus

Body elongate, cylindrical in front, compressed along tail; median vomerine teeth (roof of mouth) triangular, laterally compressed. Light to dark greyish brown above, lighter below. **Similar species:** *M. bagio* (interorbital width ~ 10.7 times in head length; 47-59 dorsal fin rays and 33-39 lateral line pores before level of anus, respectively); *Congresox* species (median teeth on vomer pointed and round in cross-section; yellow body coloration); Congridae (gill openings are lateral slits which do not nearly meet across midline); Muraenidae (no pectoral fins; gill opening a small hole; typically brightly banded, spotted or mottled); Ophichthidae (tip of tail stiff and finless). **Habitat:** Lives in coastal waters (estuaries included) on soft bottoms. Nocturnal, feeds on benthic fishes and crustaceans. **Fishery:** Consumed locally and exported in frozen form.

## Local Names

**Bam (Sin)**

**Sang (Bal)**

**Note:** The above local names are used also for *M. bagio* and *Congresox* species as well as for all members of Congridae species occurring in the area.

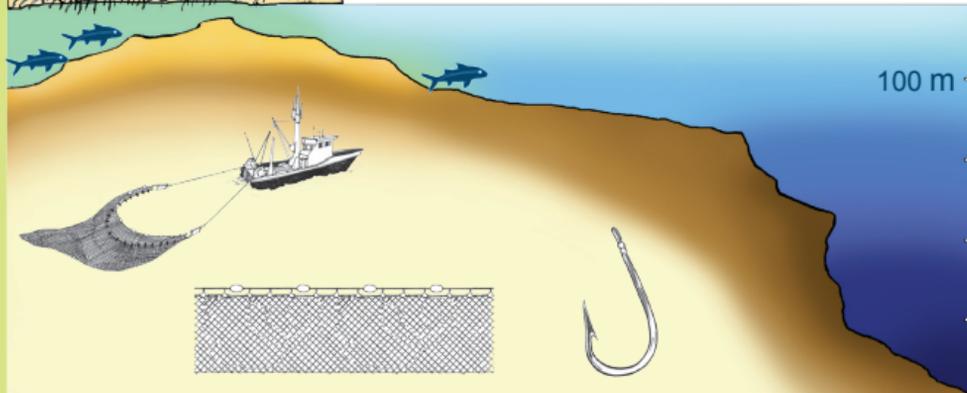


Photo collage

*Muraenesox cinereus*

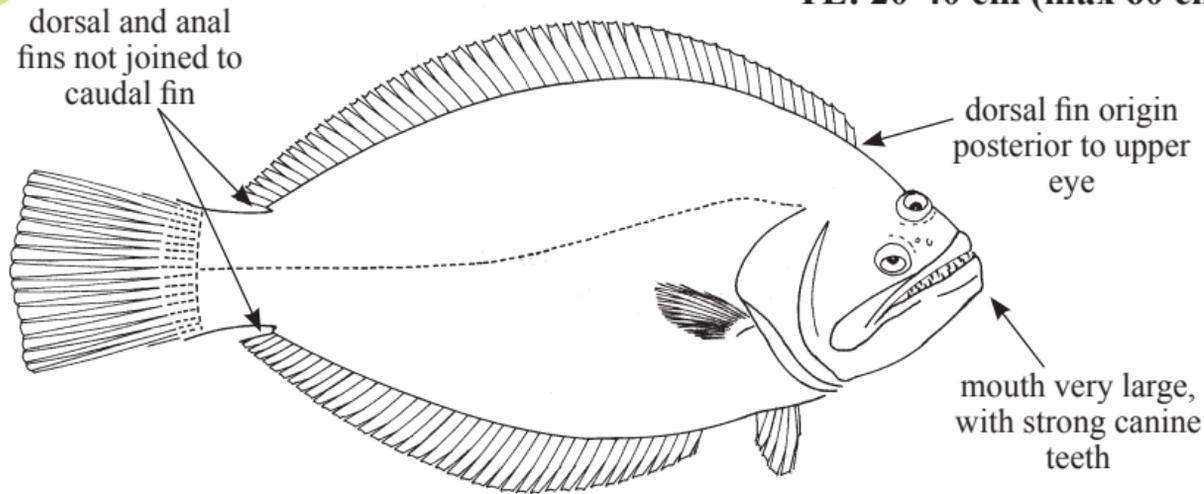
## PSETTODIDAE

FAO (En): Indian halibut

*Psettodes erumei* (Bloch & Schneider, 1801)

HAI

TL: 20-40 cm (max 60 cm)



Body oval and flat, but thicker than in most other flatfishes; anterior rays of dorsal and anal fins spinous; pelvic fins with 1 spine and 5 soft rays. Body on eyed side generally brownish or greyish, sometimes with 4-5 broad dark cross bands; dorsal, anal, and posterior area of caudal fin darker; blind side of body pale brownish. **Similar species.** All other flatfishes (dorsal fin origin anterior to upper eye; no spines in fins; no strong canine teeth in jaws). **Habitat:** Lives on mud and sand bottoms down to depths of 100 m. Often swims in an upright position. Feeds predominately on fishes, including some pelagic species. **Fishery:** Consumed locally and exported in frozen form.

Local Names

**Hajjam (Sin)**

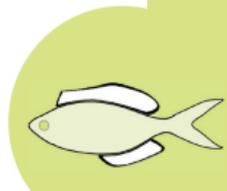
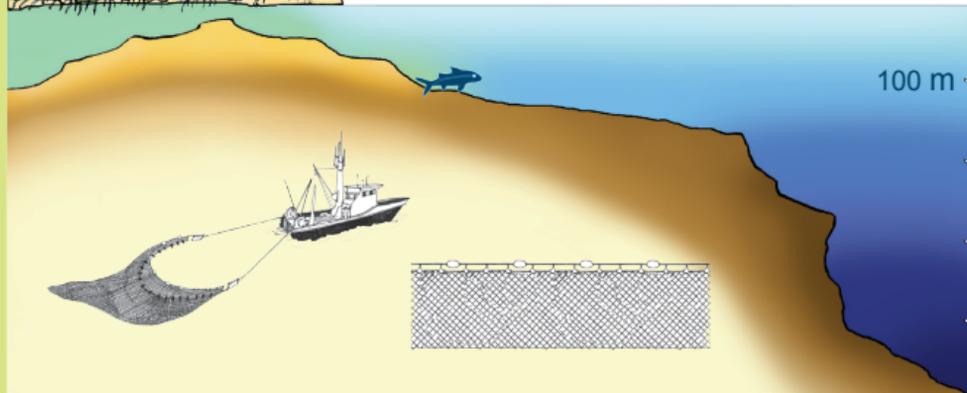
**Dantani swaso (Bal)**

**Note:** The above local names are used only for *P. erumei*.



*Psettodes erumei*

Photo: ©Hamid Badar Osmany



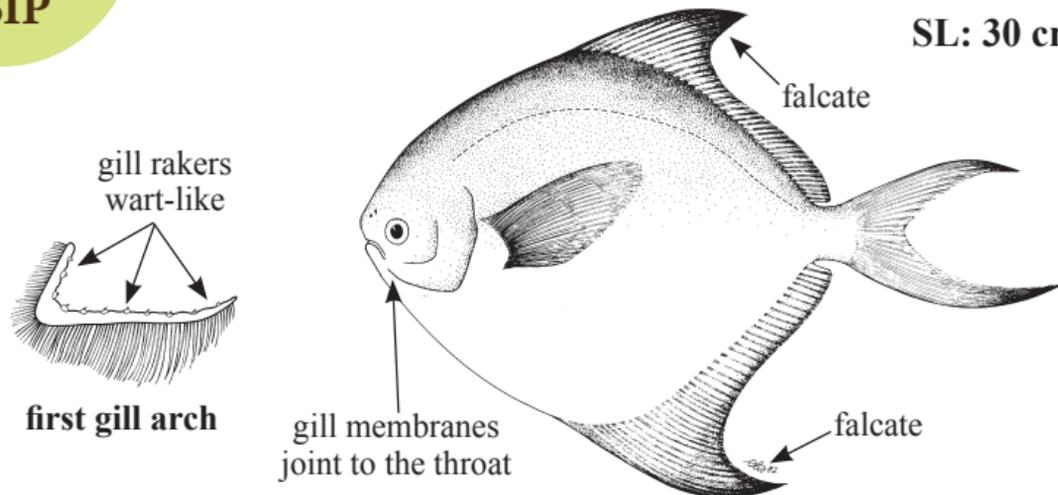
# STROMATEIDAE

FAO (En): Silver pomfret

*Pampus argenteus* (Euphrasen, 1788)

SIP

SL: 30 cm (max 60 cm)



Body firm, very deep, oval, compressed; pelvic fins absent; dorsal and anal fins preceded by 5-10 short, blade-like spines with pointed ends (embedded and barely visible in adults); dorsal fin rays 37-43. Silvery white on sides, slightly darker bluish or greyish on back. **Similar species:** *P. chinensis* (43-50 dorsal fin rays; dorsal and anal fins not produced into a falcate lobe anteriorly; no spines before fins); *Parastromateus niger* (darker colour; keel of short scutes on each side of caudal peduncle). **Habitat:** Inshore demersal over muddy bottoms. Feeds mainly on pelagic invertebrates such as copepods, salps, and jellyfishes. **Fishery:** Locally consumed and exported in frozen and chilled form .

## Local Names

**Sufaid poplt, Achopitho, Ghir pitho (Sin)**

**Tighlum, Pitho (Bal)**

**Note:** The above local names are used only for *P. argenteus*.

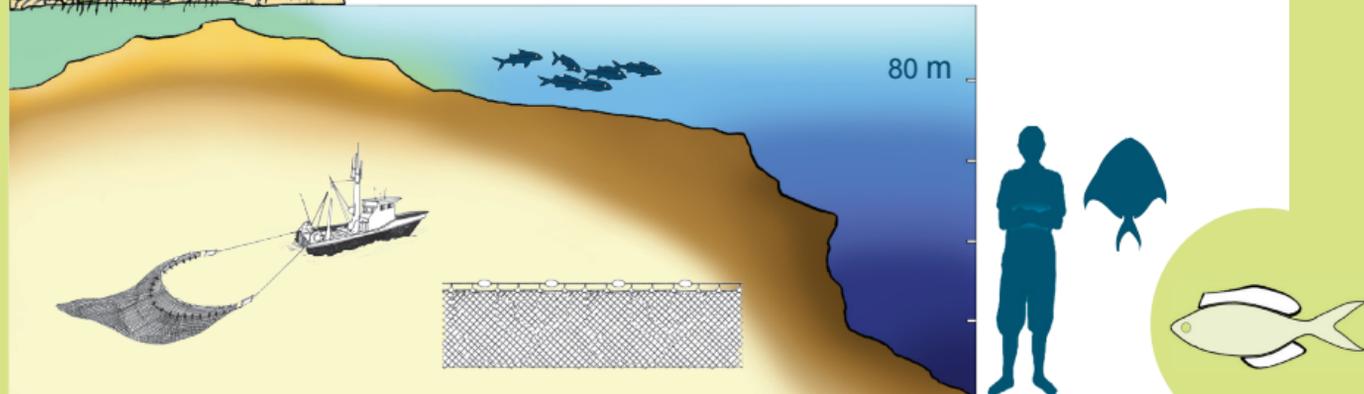


Photo collage

*Pampus argenteus*

## TRICHIURIDAE

FAO (En): Savalai hairtail

### *Lepturacanthus savala* (Cuvier, 1829)

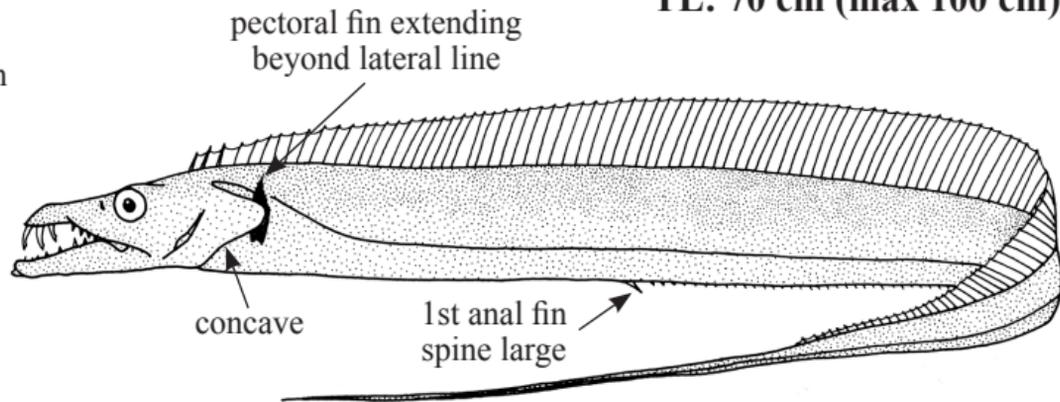
SVH

TL: 70 cm (max 100 cm)

small canine teeth  
on upper jaw



detail of mouth



Body elongate and strongly compressed, ribbon-like, tapering to a point; pelvic fins absent; pectoral fin extending beyond lateral line. Fresh specimens steel blue with silvery reflections. **Similar species:** *Trichiurus lepturus* (first anal fin spine small, shorter than diameter of pupil); no small, forward directed canine teeth in upper jaw); *Eupleurogrammus* spp. and *Tentoriceps cristatus* (pelvic fins present as small scale-like processes; lower hind margin of gill cover convex. Furthermore, pectoral fins not reaching to lateral line in *T. cristatus*). **Habitat:** Benthopelagic, in coastal waters; often comes close to the surface at night; also in creeks and mangrove areas. Feeds on a wide variety of small fishes and crustaceans. **Fishery:** Mainly exported in frozen form; small quantities consumed locally.

## Local Names

**Chind (Sin)**

**Tinji (Bal)**

**Note:** The above local names are used for all Trichiuridae species occurring in the area.

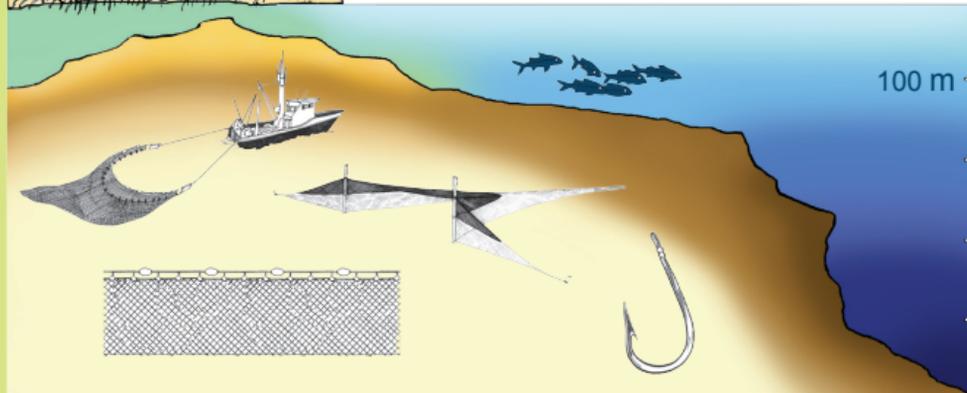
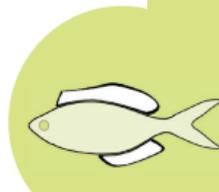


Photo: ©Paul L. Fanning

*Lepturacanthus savala*



# PENAEIDAE

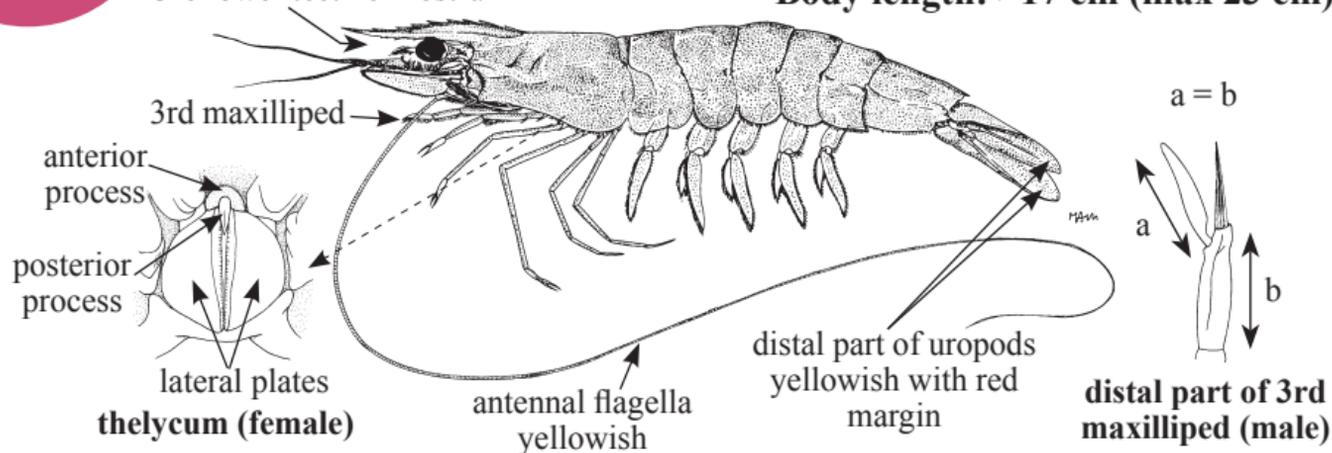
# FAO (En): Indian white prawn

*Penaeus indicus* H. Milne Edwards, 1837

PNI

3-6 lower teeth on rostrum

Body length: >17 cm (max 23 cm)



Body semi-translucent, somewhat yellowish white (small specimens) or greyish green and covered with numerous minute dark brown dots. **Similar species:** *P. merguensis* and *P. penicillatus* [3rd maxilliped of males with distal segment (a) shorter and longer than 2nd segment (b), respectively; antennal flagella reddish brown in *P. merguensis*]; *P. japonicus* (cross bands on body; thelycum unique and pouch-like); *P. monodon* (distal half of uropods dark blue or dark brown with a red or mud-yellow median transverse band, and margins reddish); *P. semisulcatus* (antennal flagella banded). *Metapenaeus* spp. (no lower teeth on rostrum). **Habitat:** Coastal marine waters, estuaries and lagoons. **Fishery:** Exported in head-on, headless shell-on and peeled frozen forms.

## Local Names

**Jaira, Saana (Sin)**

**Jaira, Madak, Patas (Bal)**

**Note:** The local names “Saana” and “Madak” are used for all Penaeidae species occurring in the area.

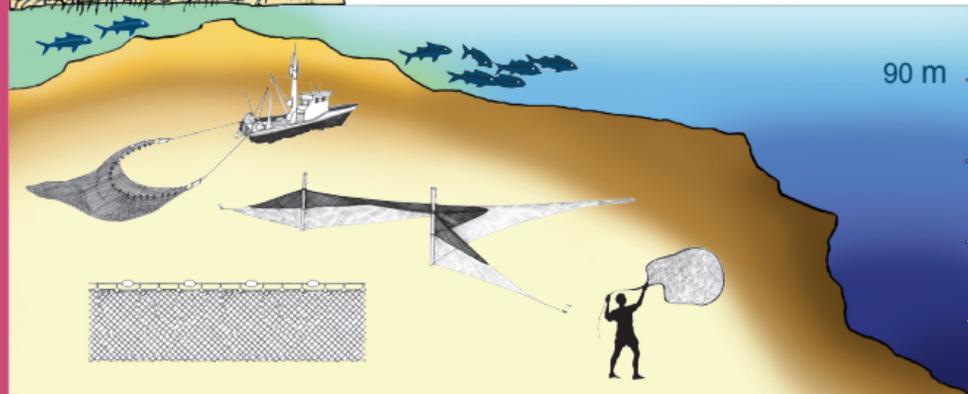


Photo: ©Hamid Badar Osmany

*Penaeus indicus*

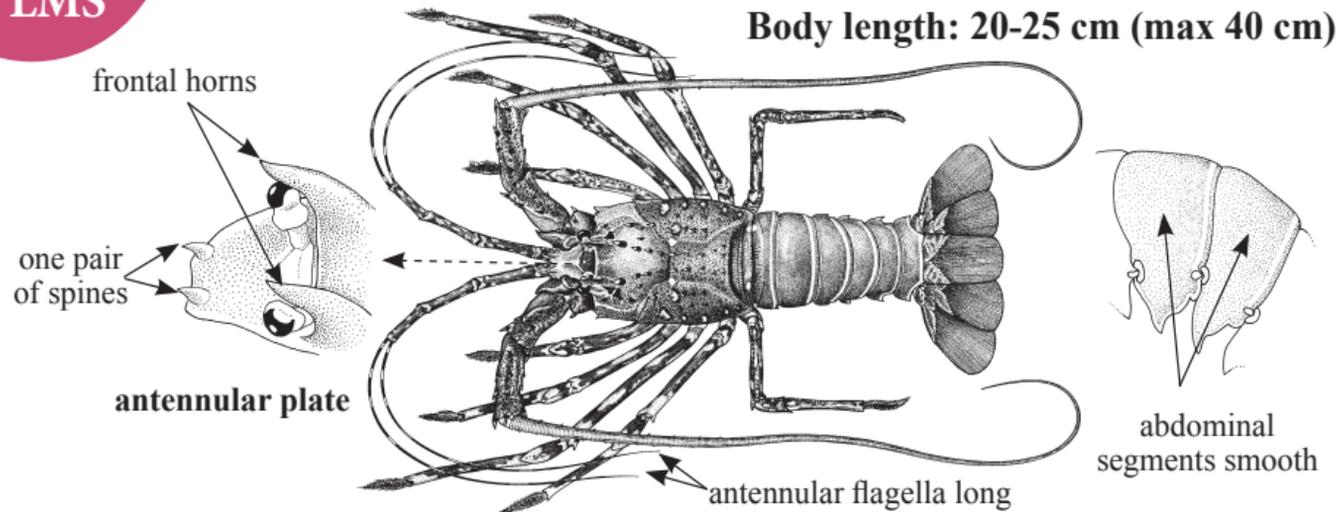


# PALINURIDAE

FAO (En): Mud spiny lobster

*Panulirus polyphagus* (Herbst, 1793)

LMS



Carapace rounded and spiny. Body dull green, abdominal segments each with a yellowish white band across posterior margin. **Similar species:** *P. ornatus*, *P. homarus*, *P. versicolor* (antennular plate with 2 pairs of spines; abdominal segments with broad dark band across middle and pale yellowish spots on either side and with transverse grooves in *P. ornatus* and *P. homarus*, respectively; carapace with distinctive pattern of dark blue and white lines in *P. versicolor*); *Puerulus* spp. (frontal horns large and widely separated; antennular flagella short). **Habitat:** Mainly found on muddy bottoms, often in turbid water near the mouths of rivers. **Fishery:** Exported in live, frozen, boiled frozen forms.

Local Names

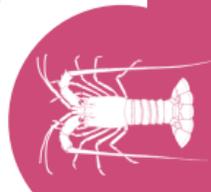
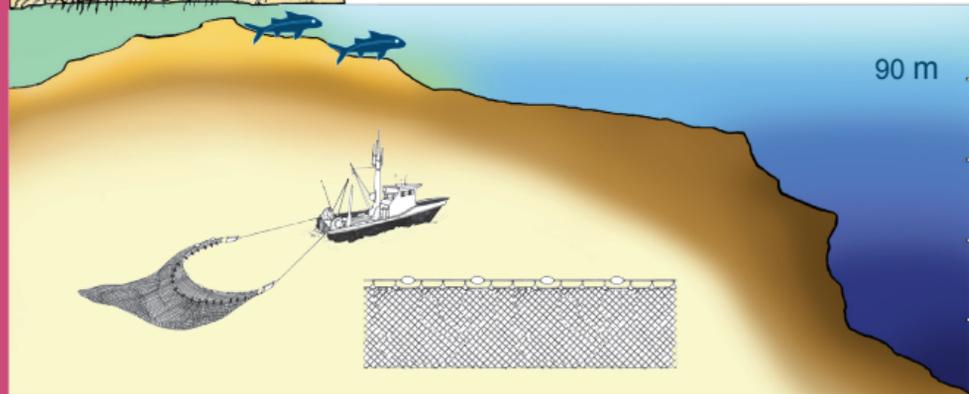
**Kikat (Sin)**

**Kika (Bal)**

**Note:** The above names are used for all Palinuridae species occurring in the area.

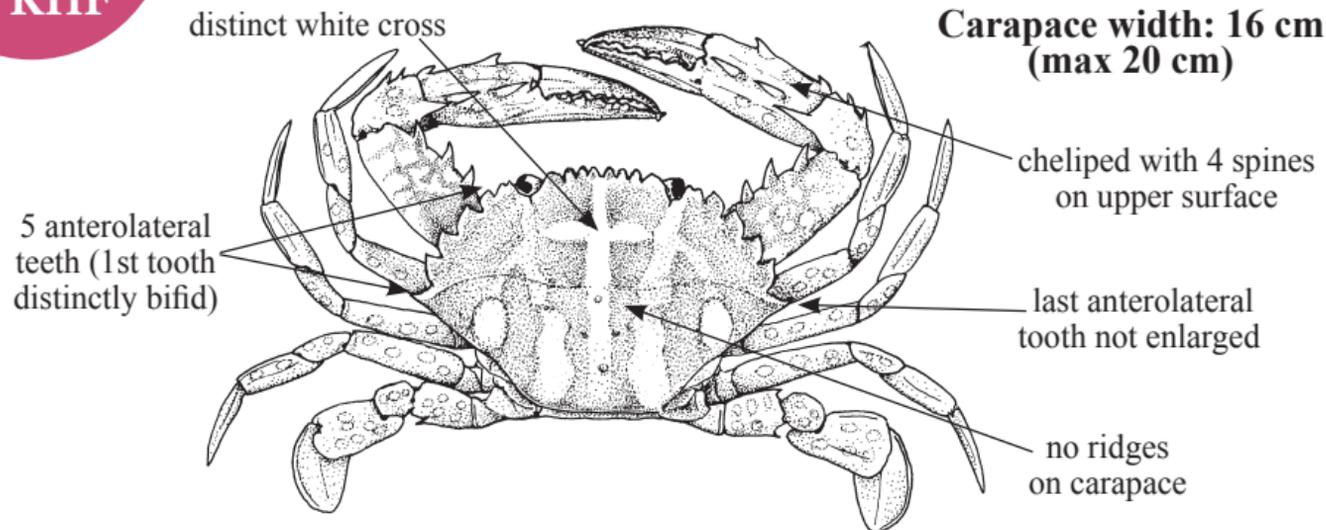


Photo: ©Hamid Badar Osmany



*Charybdis feriatus* (Linnaeus, 1758)

KHF



Distinctive pattern of longitudinal stripes of maroon and white, usually with distinct white cross on median part of gastric region; legs and pincers with numerous scattered white spots. **Similar species:** *C. smithii* (6 anterolateral teeth); *Portunus* spp. (last anterolateral tooth enlarged; carapace with 3 purple to red spots on posterior half in *P. sanguinolentus*). *Scylla* spp. (9 anterolateral teeth all subequal in size). **Habitat:** Prefers sandy to sandy-muddy substrates, at depths from 30 to 60 m. **Fishery:** Exported in whole frozen, and in form of cut crab. Small quantities consumed locally.

Local Names

**Kaikara (Sin)**

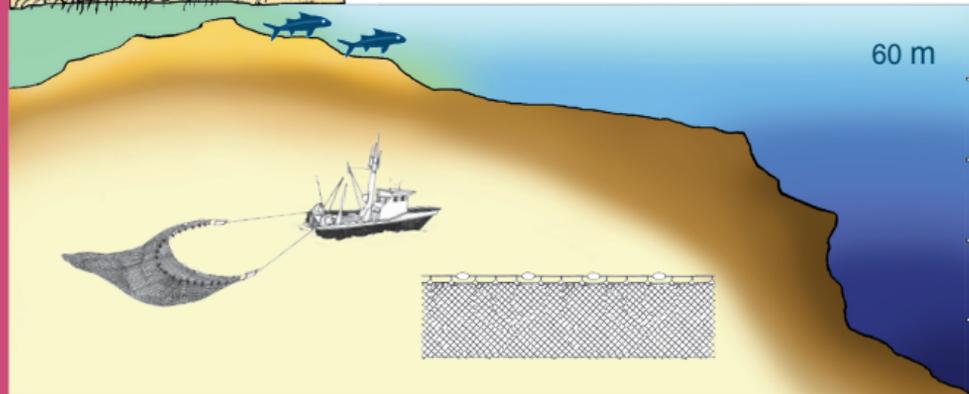
**Kukri (Bal)**

**Note:** The above names are used also for all Portunidae species occurring in the area.



*Charybdis feriatius*

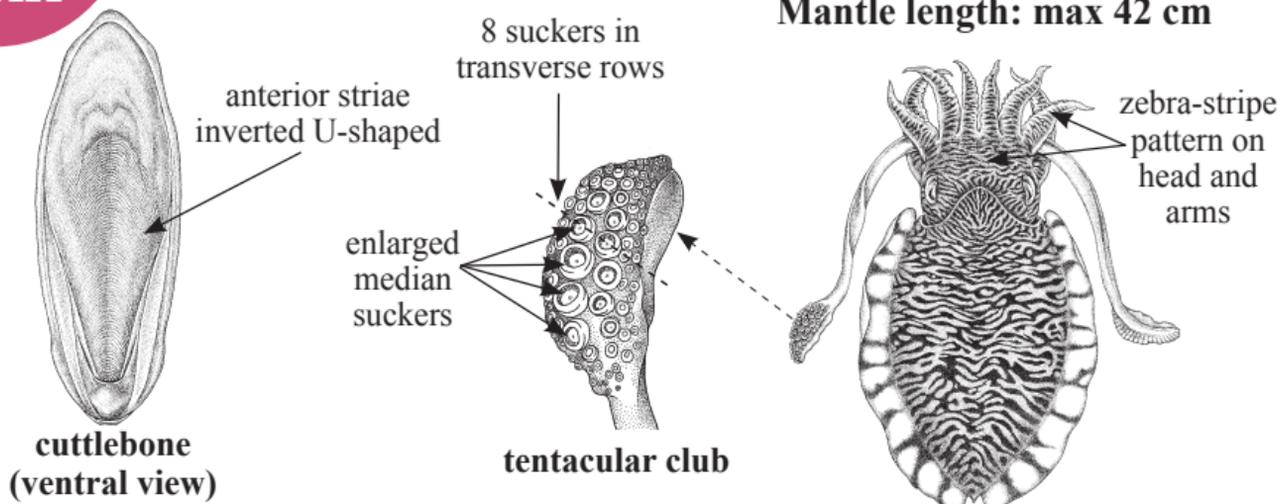
Photo: ©Paul L. Fanning



*Sepia pharaonis* Ehrenberg, 1831

IAH

Mantle length: max 42 cm



Dorsal mantle brownish or reddish purple with a transverse zebra-stripe pattern. **Similar species:** *S. prashadi* (tentacular club with 3-5 suckers in transverse rows, median ones enormously enlarged); *S. omani* (dorsal mantle with dark brown transverse stripes; anterior cuttlebone striae m-shaped); *S. kobiensis* (tentacular club with 4-5 suckers in transverse rows slightly different in size). **Habitat:** A coastal water species. **Fishery:** Exported in whole frozen, filleted and chunk frozen forms.

Local Names

**Myyah, Dimiri (Sin)**

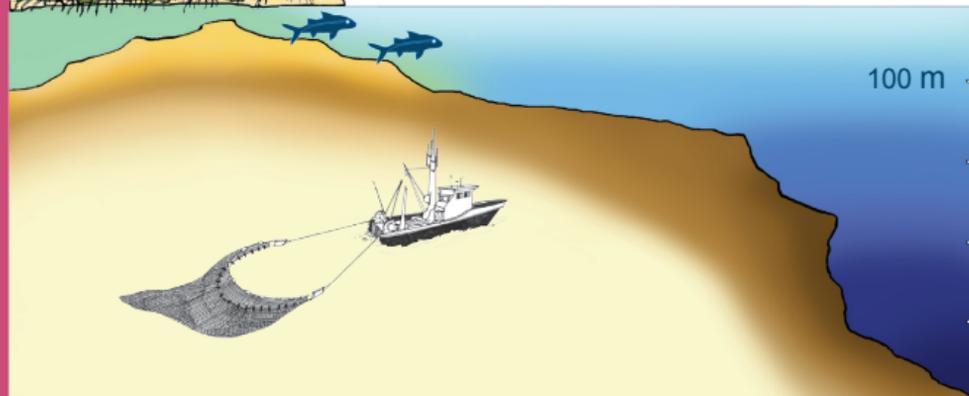
**Mus (Bal)**

**Note:** The above names are used for all *Sepia* species occurring in the area.



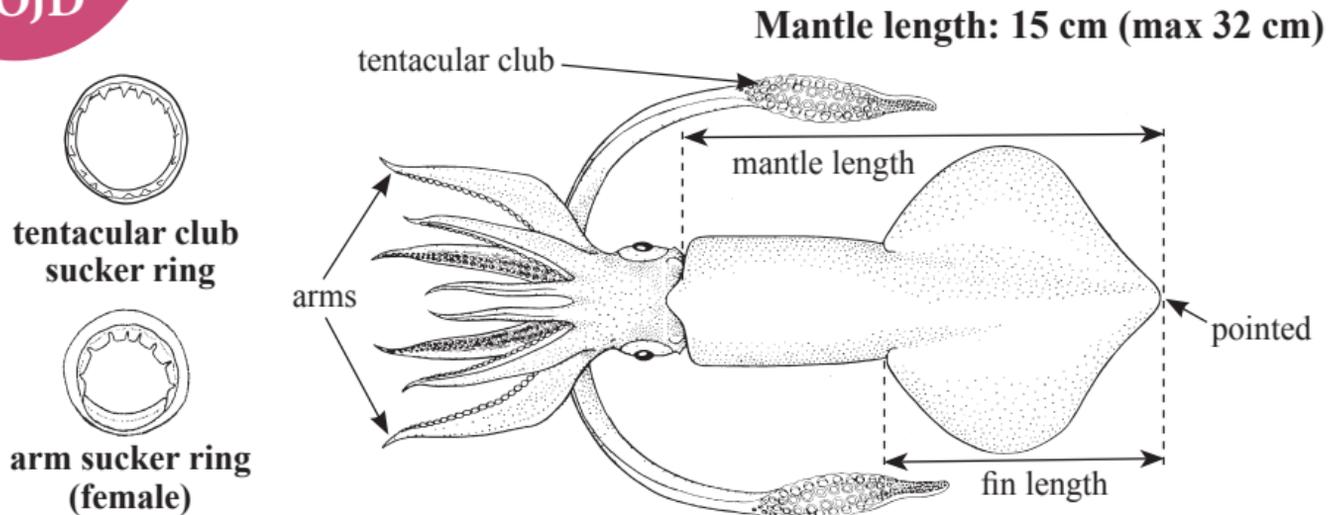
*Sepia pharaonis*

Photo collage



*Uroteuthis duvaucelii* (d' Orbigny, 1835)

OJD



Mantle moderately long and slender. Fins rhombic, up to 60% of mantle length. Tentacular clubs large and expanded, up to 45-50% of mantle length. Median sucker rings of tentacular club with 14-22 short, sharp teeth. **Similar species:** *U. singhalensis* (tentacular clubs short, slightly expanded); *U. edulis* (fins longer, attaining 70% of mantle length); *Sepioteuthis lessoniana* (fins attain >90% of mantle length); *Loliolus hardwickei* (fins large, heart-shaped, mantle short, stout with rounded edges). **Habitat:** A neritic, inshore species, forming large aggregations during the spawning season. **Fishery:** Exported in whole frozen, filleted and chunk frozen forms.

## Local Names

**Mayyah, Sisi mayyah, Shishi  
Mayya (Sin)**

**Mus, Mayyah (Bal)**

**Note:** The above names are used for all Loliiginidae species occurring in the area.

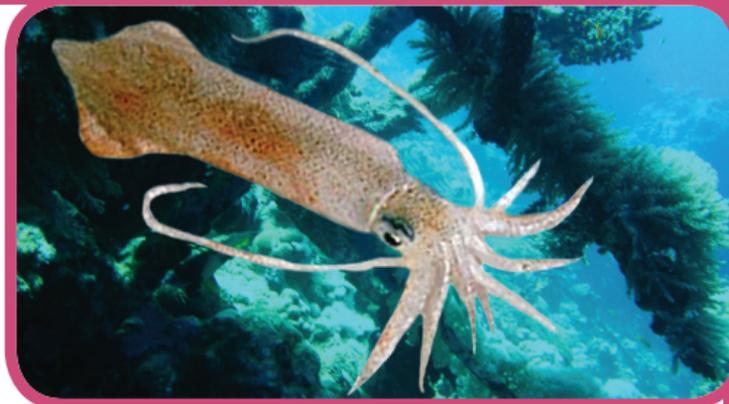
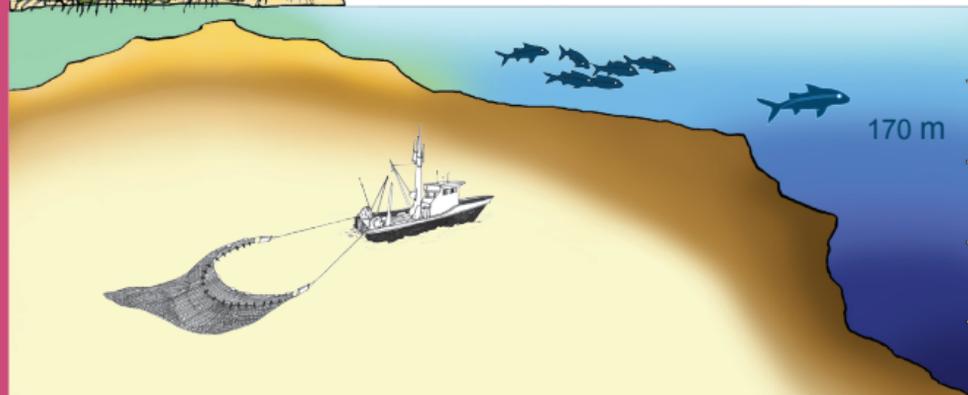


Photo: ©C. Cherdchinda (background altered)



# ALOPIIDAE

FAO (En): Bigeye thresher

*Alopias superciliosus* Lowe, 1841

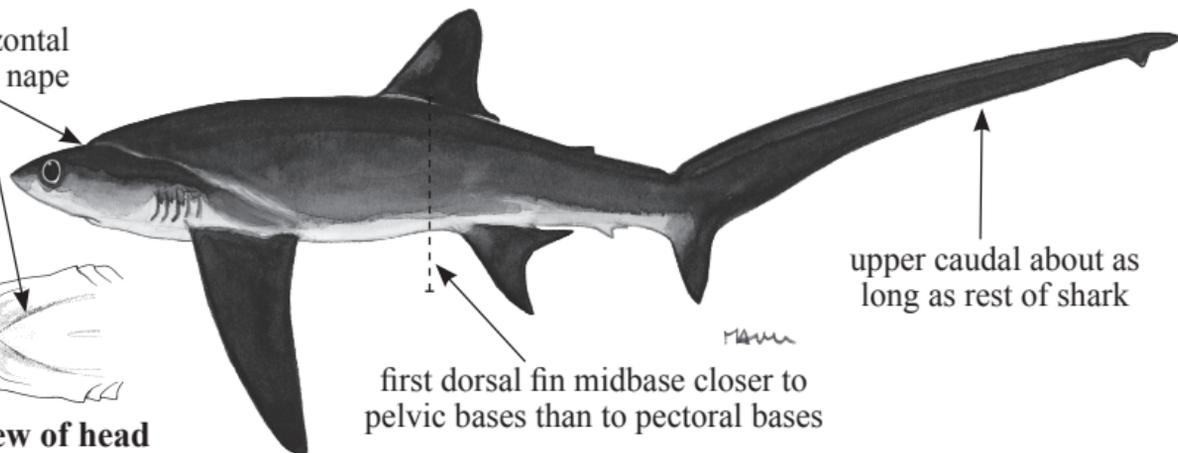
BTH

TL: 270-350 cm (max 480 cm)

deep horizontal groove on nape



**dorsal view of head**



first dorsal fin midbase closer to pelvic bases than to pectoral bases

upper caudal about as long as rest of shark

Distinctive huge eyes extending onto flat topped head. Purplish grey or grey-brown above, light grey to white below, not extending above pectoral fin bases. **Similar species:** *A. pelagicus* (very narrow head with straight forehead and arched profile; eyes smaller, with orbits not expanded onto dorsal surface of head; first dorsal fin midbase equidistant between pectoral and pelvic fin bases; body deep blue above). **Habitat:** Close inshore to open ocean. Uses its tail to stun the pelagic fishes on which it feeds. **Fishery:** Meat consumed locally and exported in salted-dried form. Fins exported in dried form. Liver used for extraction of oil for smearing hull of ships.

Local Names

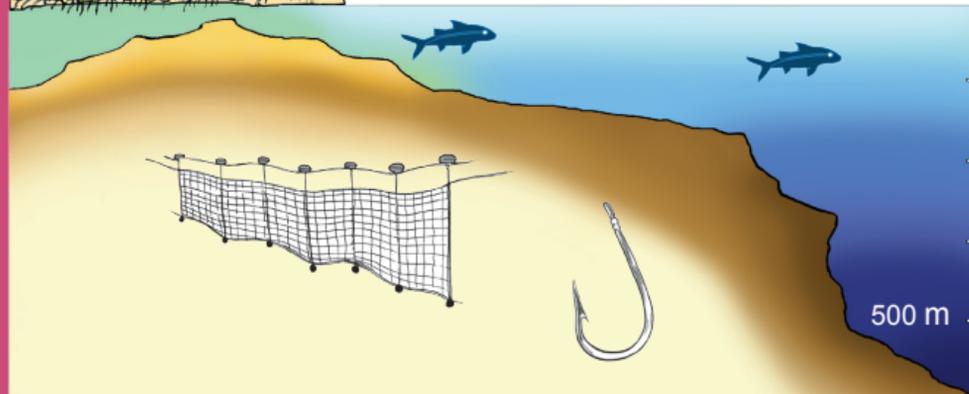
**Poonshirin, Parri (Sin)**

**Dumbi, Mushk (Bal)**

**Note:** The above names are used also for *A. pelagicus*.



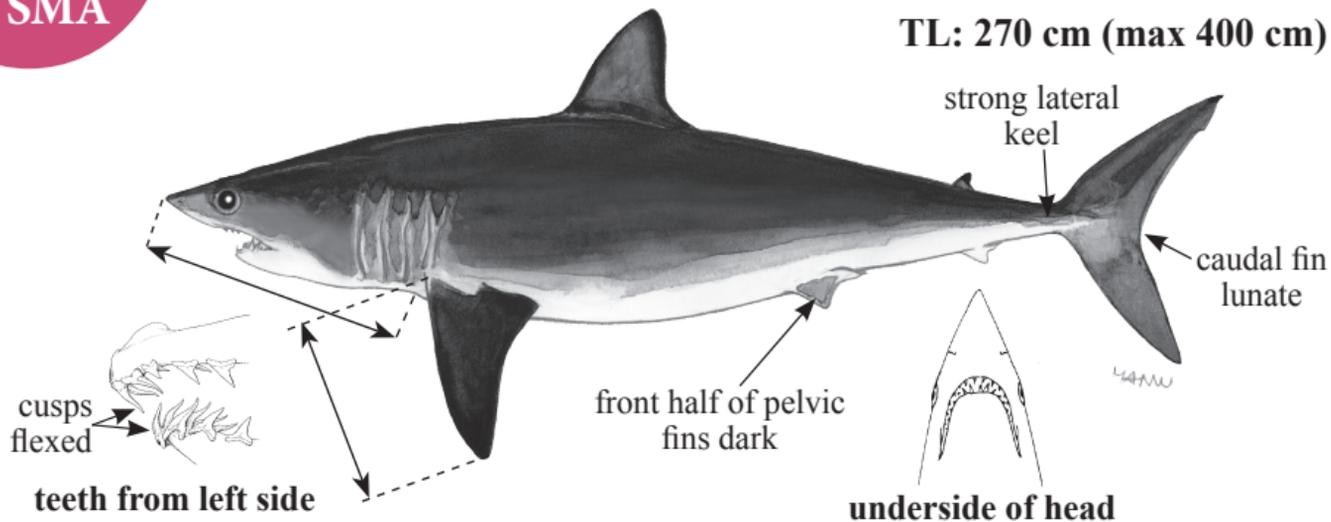
Photo: ©Ramón Bonfil



*Alopias superciliosus*

*Isurus oxyrinchus* Rafinesque, 1810

SMA



Long pointed snout; 'U'-shaped mouth, large blade-like teeth; pectoral fins shorter than head and acutely pointed. Back brilliant blue or purple, underside usually white. **Similar species:** *I. paucus* (less pointed snout; pectoral fins as long as head and broad-tipped; underside of snout and mouth dusky in adults; cups of upper and lower teeth straighter). **Habitat:** Coastal and oceanic. Feeds mainly on fishes and squid. Highly migratory. Possibly the fastest shark in the world; can swim at speeds up to 100km/hour and jump out of the water. **Fishery:** Meat consumed locally and exported in salted-dried form. Fins exported in dried form. Liver used for extraction of oil for smearing hull of ships.

Local Names

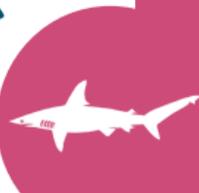
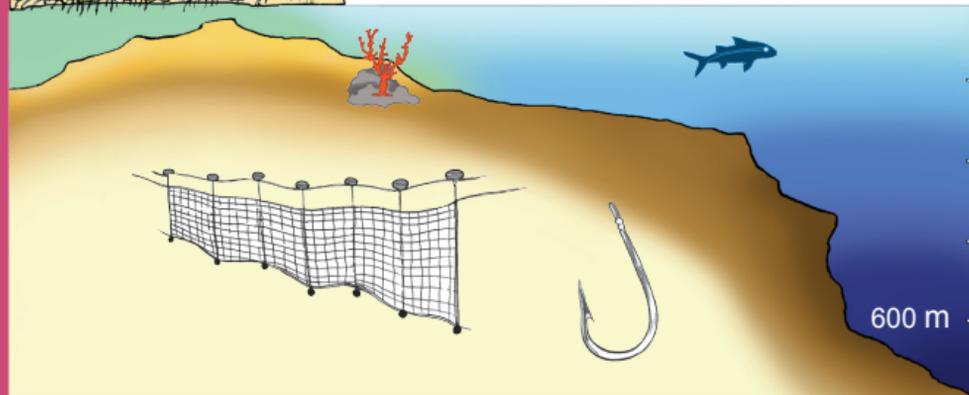
**Nar manger, Aar (Sin)**

**Nar manger (Bal)**

**Note:** The above names are used also *I. paucus*.



Photo: ©Muhammad Moazzam



*Isurus paucus*

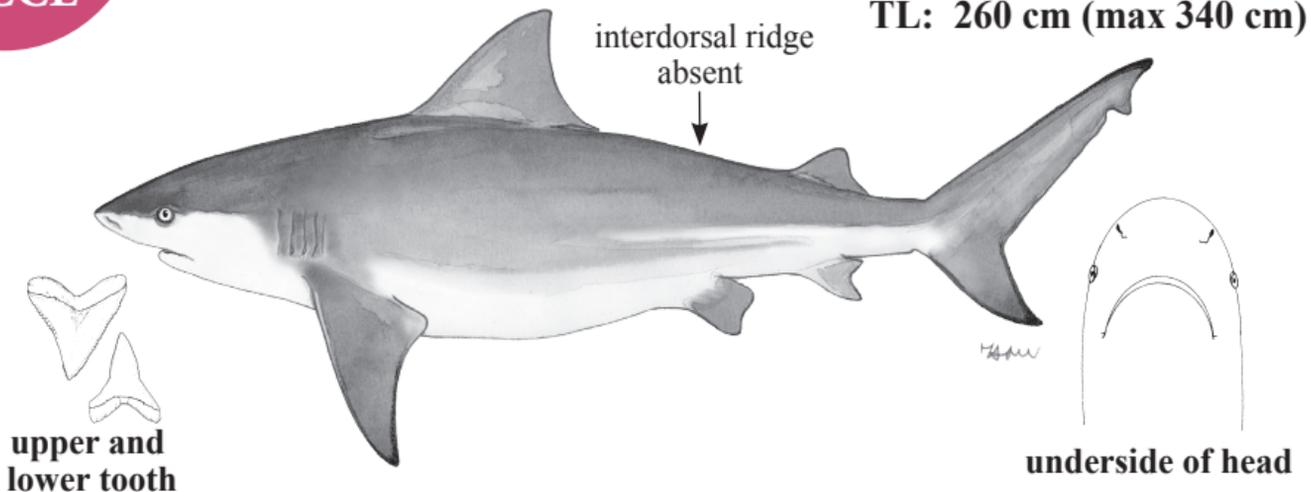
# CARCHARHINIDAE

FAO (En): Bull shark

*Carcharhinus leucas* (Müller & Henle, 1839)

CCE

TL: 260 cm (max 340 cm)



Large, massive greyish shark; underside white, fin tips dusky but not conspicuously marked, except in juveniles. Very short, broad, bluntly-rounded snout; small eyes; first dorsal fin less than 3.2 times the second dorsal fin height; 24-29 upper and 24-28 lower teeth. **Similar species:** *C. amboinensis* (first dorsal fin over 3 times second dorsal fin height; 23-27 upper and 23-25 lower teeth); *C. longimanus* (huge rounded first dorsal and pectoral fins with white-mottled tips); *C. altimus*, *C. plumbeus* (snout longer; interdorsal ridge present). **Habitat:** Usually close inshore in bays and river estuaries. Penetrates far up rivers. **Fishery:** Meat consumed locally and exported in salted-dried form. Fins exported in dried form. Liver used for extraction of oil for smearing hull of ships.

## Local Names

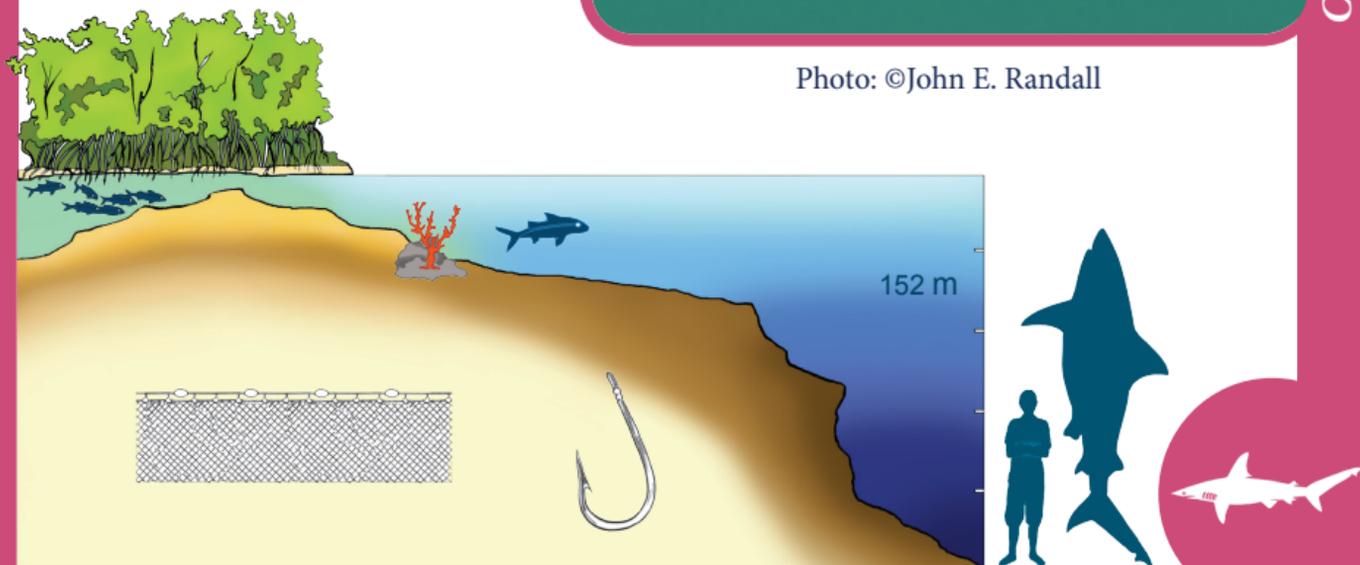
**Kandri, More (Sin)**

**Bagore Worook, Gwark (Bal)**

**Note:** The above names are used also for *C. amboinensis*.



Photo: ©John E. Randall

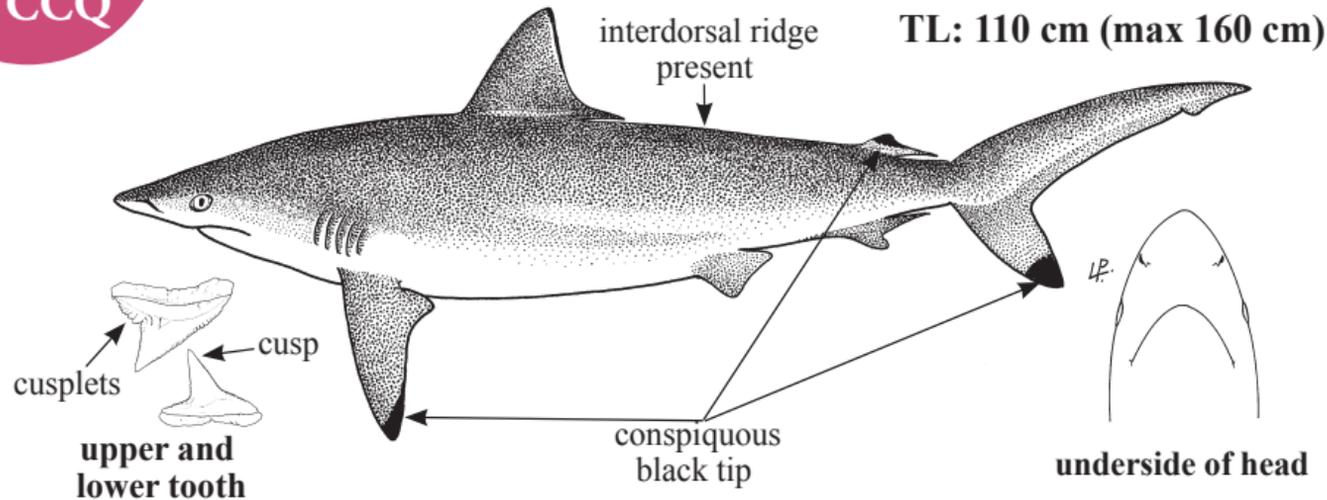


# CARCHARINIDAE

# FAO (En): Spot-tail shark

*Carcharhinus sorrah* (Müller & Henle, 1839)

CCQ



Inner margin of 2nd dorsal fin over twice fin height. oblique-cusped serrated teeth. Medium-grey above, white below; a conspicuous white band on flanks. **Similar species:** *C. hemiodon* (cusps of upper teeth smooth or weakly serrated; inner margin of 2nd dorsal fin less than twice the fin height); *C. limbatus*, *C. brevipinna*, *C. amblyrhynchoides* (upper teeth with erect or nearly erect narrow cusps and no cusplets; no interdorsal ridge); *C. macloiti* (smooth-edged upper teeth; no interdorsal ridge; no prominent markings on fins); *C. dussumieri* (black spot on 2nd dorsal fin the only conspicuous markings). **Habitat:** Inhabits coastal and offshore waters. **Fishery:** Meat consumed locally and exported in salted-dried form. Fins exported in dried form.

## Local Names

**Karpick, Paggas (Sin)**

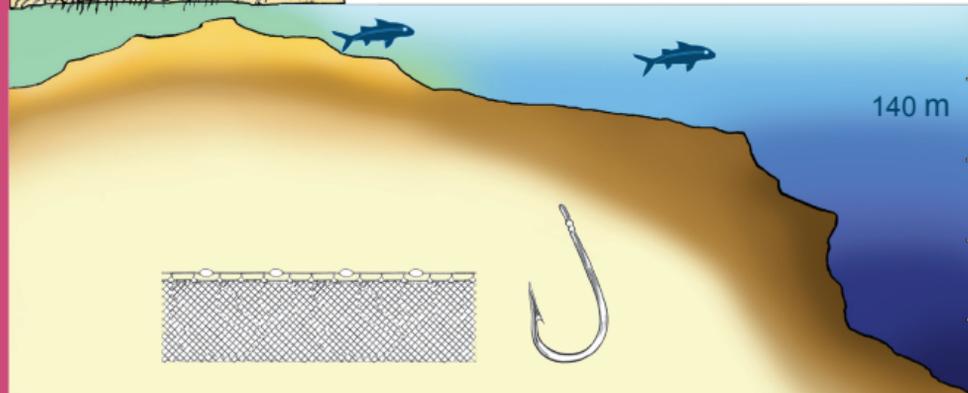
**Kanaitar, Paggas (Bal)**

**Note:** The above names are used also for *C. plumbeus*.



*Carcharhinus sorrah*

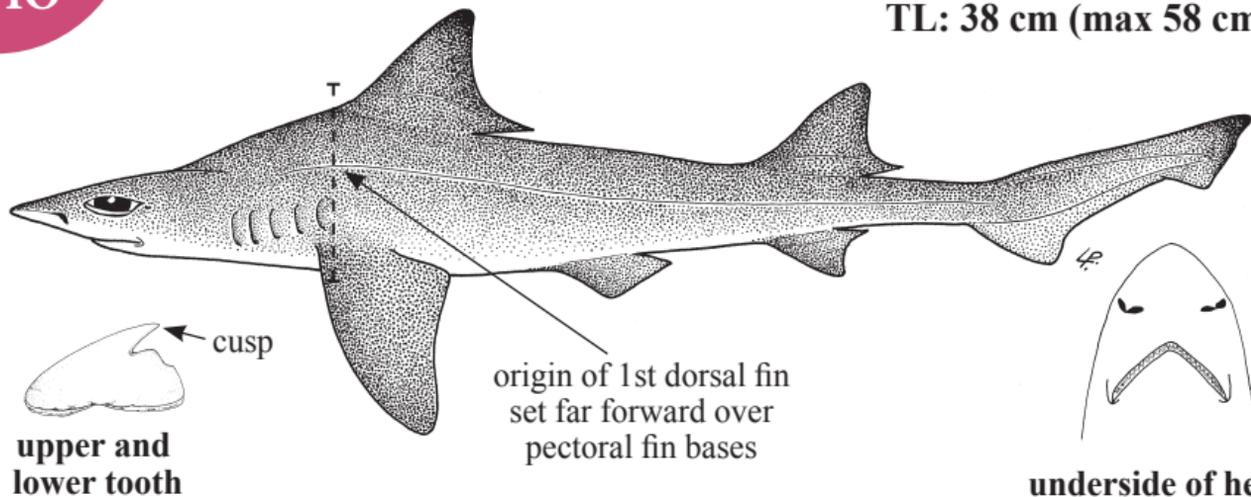
Photo: ©Muhammad Moazzam



*Iago omanensis* (Norman, 1939)

TIO

TL: 38 cm (max 58 cm)



A small, slender shark with a stout, humpbacked trunk. Head flattened above and below. Uniform greyish brown above, lighter below. **Similar species:** *Mustelus mosis* (teeth without cusps; first dorsal fin origin over pectoral inner margins). An apparently undescribed species of *Iago* occurs in Pakistan along with *I. omanensis*. It differs in having the origin of the first dorsal fin more posterior, softer skin and muscles, and a darker coloration. **Habitat:** Found on the continental shelf and slope at depths from 110 to 1 000 or more. Feeds on bony fishes and cephalopods. **Fishery:** Meat consumed locally and exported in salted-dried form. Fins exported in dried form.

## Local Names

**Chua, Pishik (Sin)**

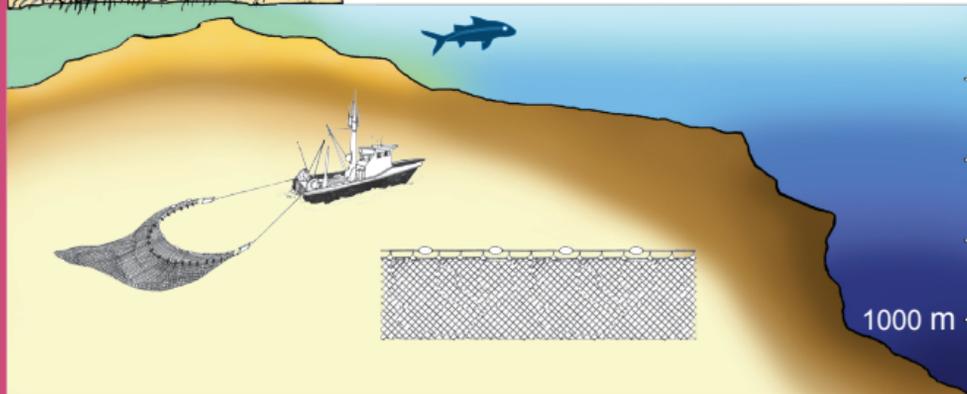
**Chao (Bal)**

**Note:** The local name “Pishik” is used also for *Rhizoprionodon* species and *Carcharhinus plumbeus*.



*Iago omanensis*

Photo collage



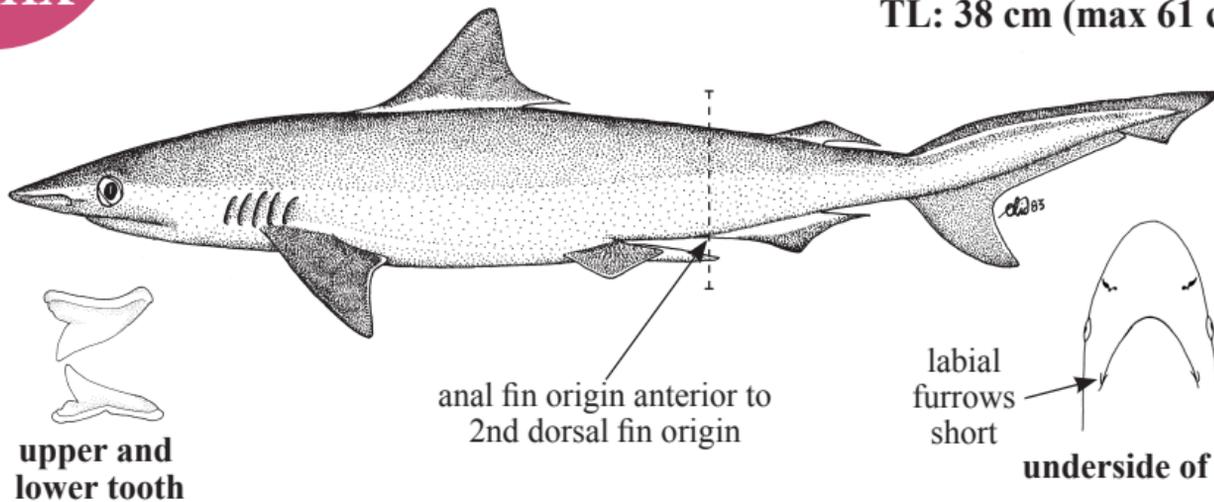
# CARCHARHINIDAE

FAO (En): Grey sharpnose shark

*Rhizoprionodon oliginx* Springer, 1964

RHX

TL: 38 cm (max 61 cm)



A small, slender shark. Grey-brown (bronzey when fresh) above, pale below, inconspicuous dusky edges. **Similar species:** *R. acutus* (grey-purplish above; labial furrows very long); *Scoliodon laticaudus* (very long, flattened, spade-like snout; small eyes); *Carcharhinus* spp. (origin of second dorsal fin about opposite that of anal fin); *Loxodon macrorhinus* (big eyes with posterior notches). **Habitat:** A little known inshore and offshore shark found on continental and insular shelves. **Fishery:** Meat consumed locally and exported in salted-dried form. Fins exported in dried form.

## Local Names

**Gissi, Pishik, Golden (Sin)**

**Tailago pishik, Sorapi (Bal)**

**Note:** The local name “Pishik” is used also for *R. acutus*, *Carcharhinus plumbeus* and *Iago omanensis*.

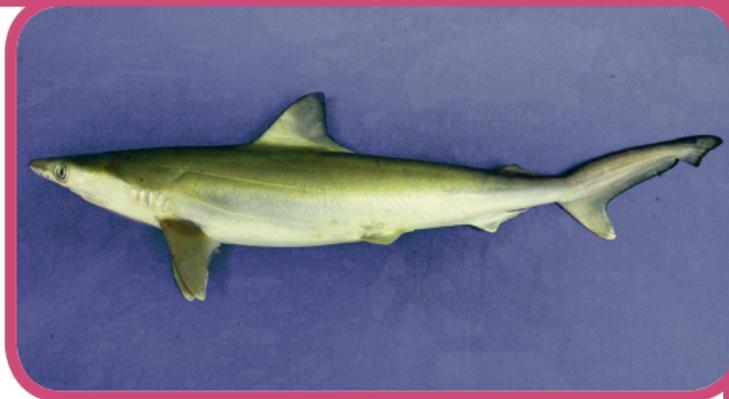
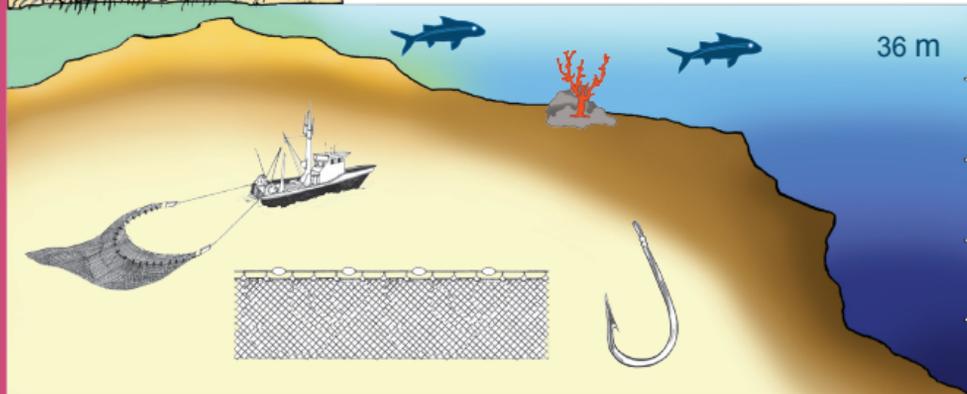


Photo: ©Muhammad Moazzam



*Rhizoprionodon oligoinx*



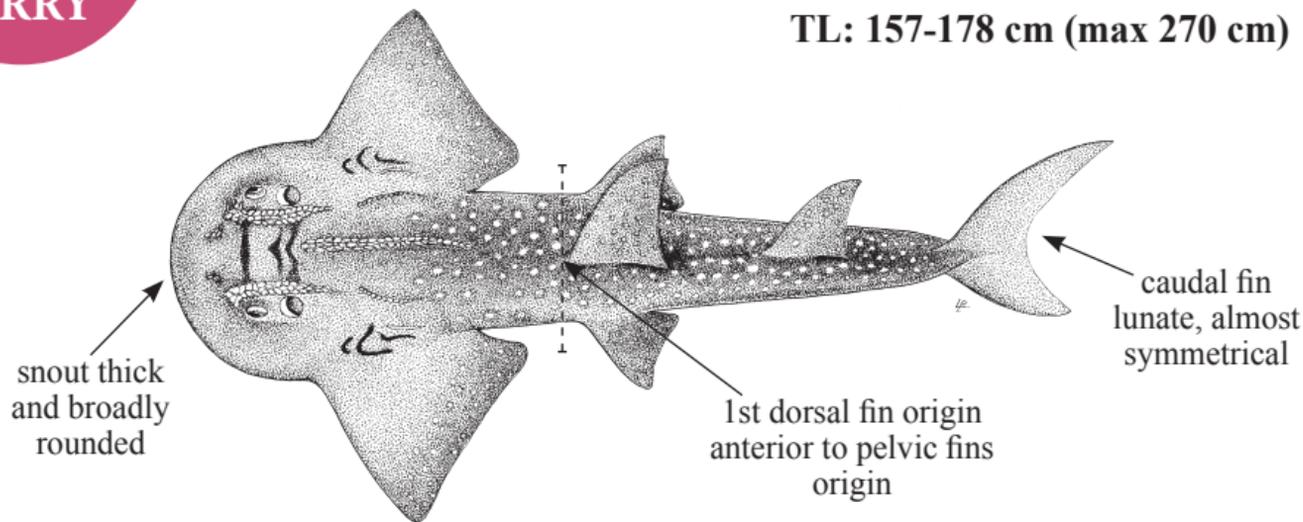
# RHINIDAE

# FAO (En): Bowmouth guitarfish

*Rhina ancylostoma* Bloch & Schneider, 1801

RRY

TL: 157-178 cm (max 270 cm)



Body thick and shark-like; heavy ridges of spiky thorns on back, over eyes and spiracles. Grey above, white below; numerous white spots dorsally on fins, body and tail; black bands and markings on head and shoulders. **Similar species:** *Rhynchobatus* spp. (snout distinctly bottle-shaped; origin of first dorsal fin about opposite to pelvic fins origin); Rhinobatidae (body flatter; pectoral fins with origins in front of nostrils; first dorsal fin with origin behind rear tips of pelvic fins); Pristidae (snouts with a rostral saw). **Habitat:** Benthic in coastal areas and on coral reefs. Feeds on crustaceans and molluscs. **Fishery:** Meat consumed locally and exported in dried-salted form. Fins exported in dried form.

Local Names

**Bhuth-khair (Sin)**

**Kobayyadri, Kohbaradri,  
Baradri (Bal)**

**Note:** The above names are used only for  
*R. ancylostoma*.

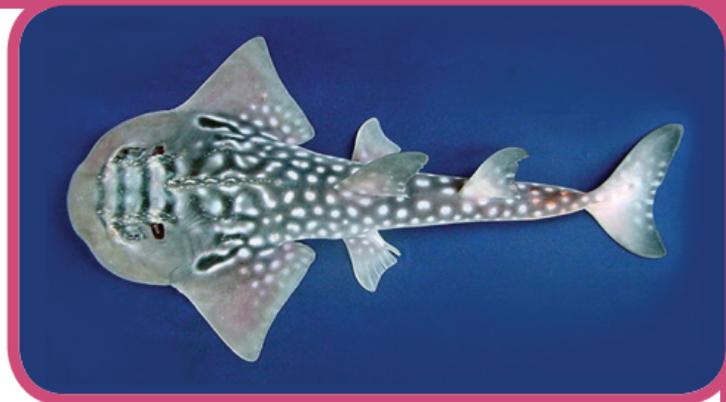
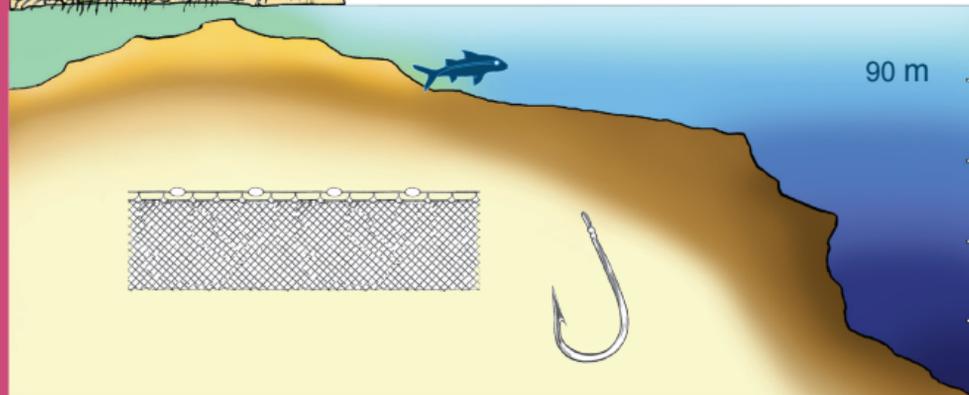


Photo: ©Muhammad Moazzam

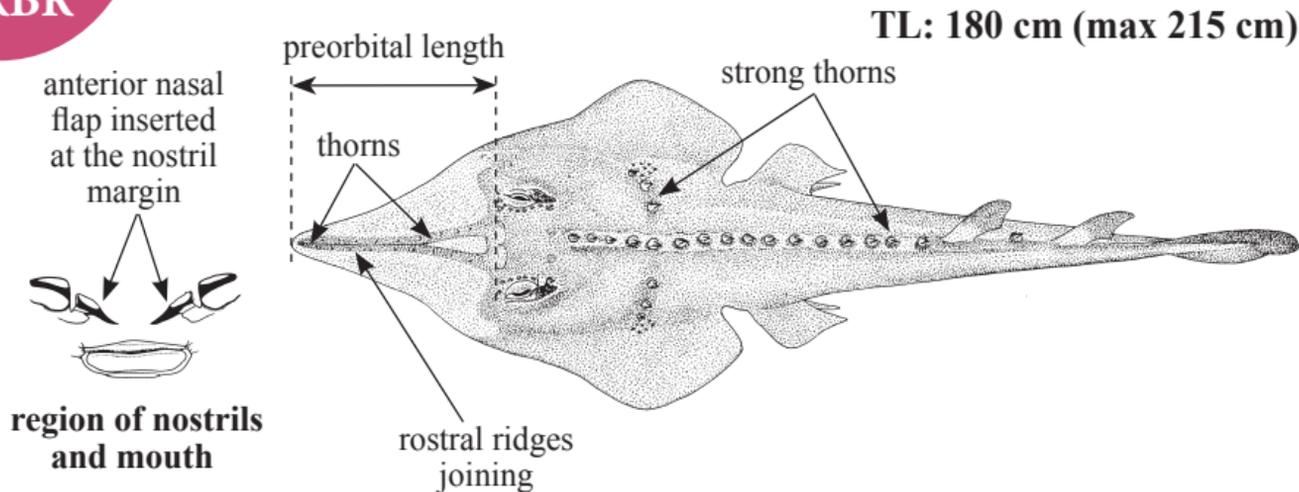


# RHINOBATIDAE

FAO (En): Granulated guitarfish

*Glaucostegus* cf. *granulatus* (Cuvier, 1829)

RBR



Snout long and anteriorly slender, its preorbital length 4.7-4.9 in TL. Grey-brown dorsally, white below. **Similar species:** *G. obtusus* (Snout short, broad-tipped; preorbital length 7.7-8.8 in TL); *G. halavi* (preorbital length 7.0-7.4 in TL; rostral ridges close together); *Rhinobatos punctifer*, *R. cf. annandalei* (anterior nasal flaps extending for a short distance onto internarial space; rostral cartilages more or less separated; scattered white spots on dorsal surface); *Acroteriobatus salalah* (anterior nasal flaps inserted well into internarial space; scattered, dark-edged, bluish white spots on dorsal surface). **Habitat:** Ranges from the intertidal to offshore continental shelves. **Fishery:** Meat consumed locally and exported in dried-salted form. Fins exported in dried form.

## Local Names

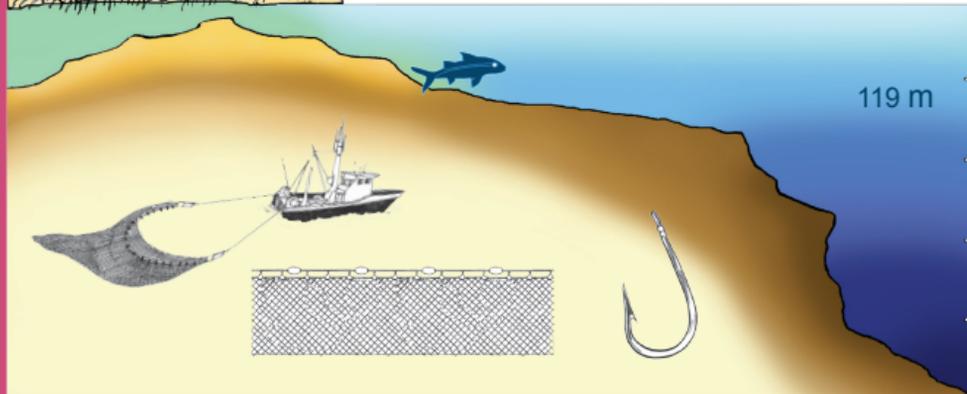
**Rabba, Kairi, Seerol, Sail, Siroe,  
Cun-daree (Sin)**

**Zahro (Bal)**

**Note:** The above names are used also for other Rhinobatidae species occurring in the area.



Photo collage



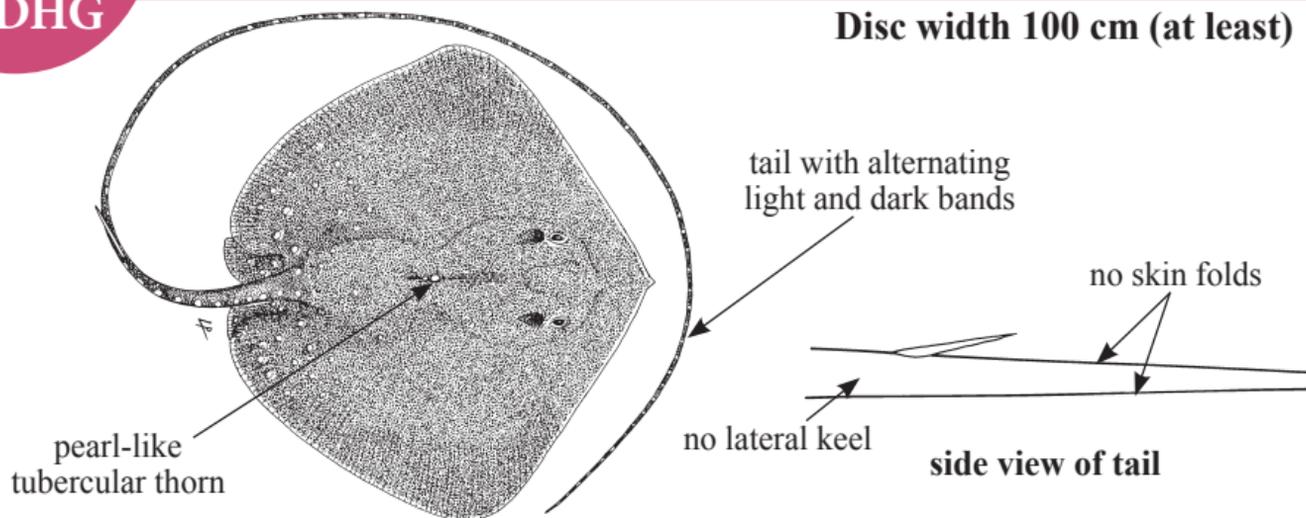
DASYATIDAE

FAO (En): Whitespotted whipray

*Himantura gerrardi* (Gray, 1851)

DHG

Disc width 100 cm (at least)



Disc rhomboidal; denticle band narrow, not extending to tail base (in juveniles restricted to central disc); some enlarged denticles before and after pearl-like tubercular thorn. Upper surface with diffuse white spots confined to posterior half of disc (sometimes spots very sparse, absent or also extending over anterior disc). **Similar species:** *H. randalli* (dorsal disc lacking white spots; denticle band extending to dorsal surface of tail); *H. imbricata* (disc almost oval; tail short, with low dorsal and ventral cutaneous folds); *H. leoparda* and *H. uarnak* (upper surface of adults with leopard-like ocelli and with fine spots or reticulations, respectively). **Habitat:** Demersal on the inner continental shelf. **Fishery:** Mostly used as raw material for fish meal also wings exported in frozen form.

## Local Names

**Pittan, Papri (Sin)**

**Pittan, Uthar, Shikki (Bal)**

**Note:** The above names are also used for other Dasyatidae species occurring in the area.

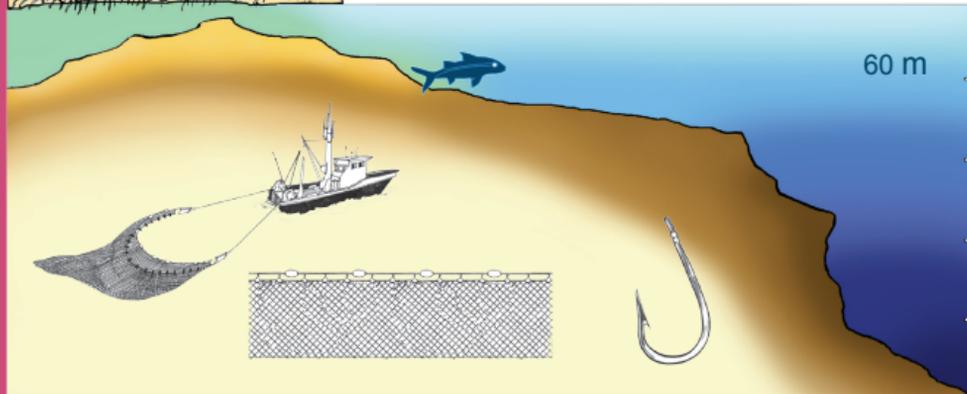


Photo: ©Hamid Badar Osmany



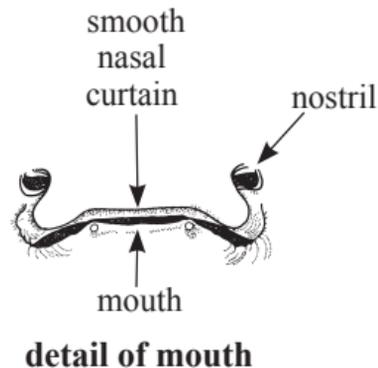
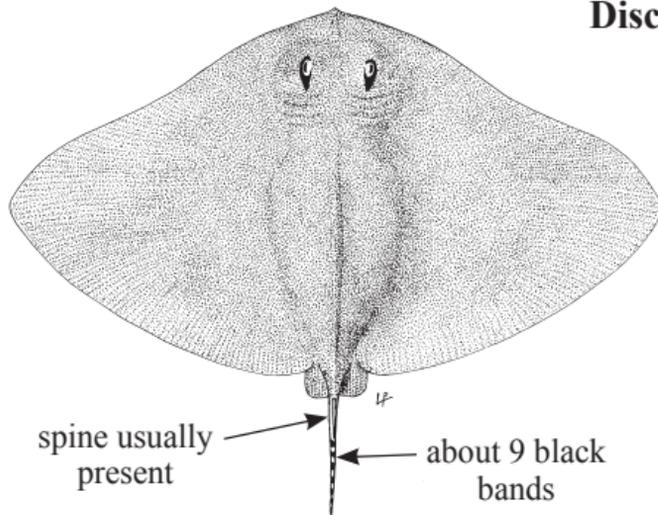
GYMNURIDAE

FAO (En): Long-tailed butterfly ray

*Gymnura poecilura* (Shaw, 1804)

RGP

Disc width 40-60 cm (max 92 cm)



Disc lozenge-shaped, at least twice as broad as long; dorsal fin absent and no tentacle on posterior margin of spiracle. Dorsal surface usually plain, sometimes with faint pale spots; ventral side white to creamy white. **Similar species:** *G. tentaculata* (tentacle on posterior margin of spiracle; tail unbanded). No other batoids in the area combine lozenge-shaped pectoral discs nearly twice as wide as long and short slender whip-like tails without caudal fins. **Habitat:** Demersal in coastal waters. Feeds on benthic invertebrates and small fishes. **Fishery:** Mostly used as raw material for fish meal.

Local Names

**Bapha, Phappa (Sin)**

**Phappo (Bal)**

**Note:** The above names are used only for *G. poecilura*.

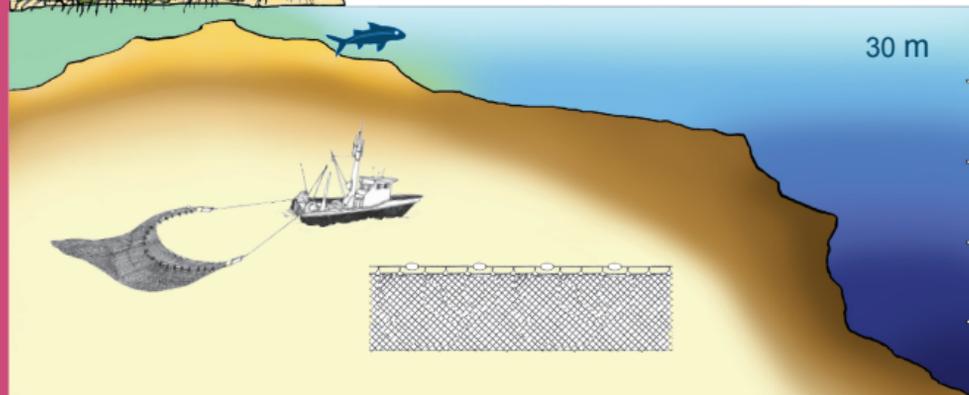


Photo: ©John E. Randall

*Gymnura poecilura*



# MYLIOBATIDAE

FAO (En): Ocellated eagle ray

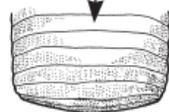
*Aetobatus ocellatus* (Kuhl, 1823)

MAO

Disc width: 300 cm (at least)

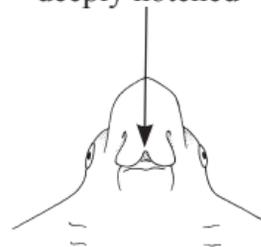


a single row



**Tooth plate  
(upper jaw)**

nasal curtain  
deeply notched



**head (ventral view)**

Snout moderately long, broadly rounded; teeth in a single row in both jaws. Dorsal surface dark greenish grey, variably white spotted. **Similar species:** *A. flagellum* (snout very long, narrowly tapering; dorsal surface of disc unspotted); *Aetomylaeus* spp. (nasal curtain almost straight; no spine on tail; teeth in 7 rows, a long median one and 3 smaller ones on each side); *Rhinoptera* spp. (snout notched medially, formed as 2 rounded lobes; 3 rows of laterally expanded medial plate-like teeth in jaws). **Habitat:** Found in coastal waters, including estuarine habitats. Feeds primarily on bivalve molluscs. **Fishery:** Mostly used as raw material for fish meal.

Local Names

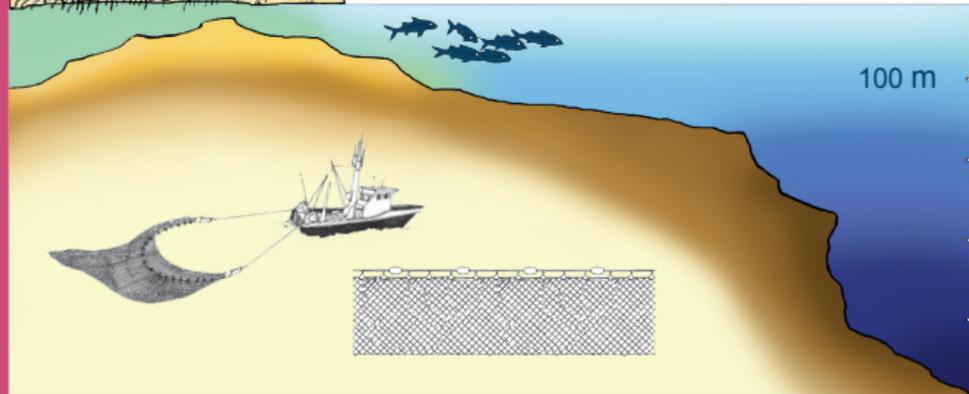
**Magol, Kutti, Cheel (Sin)**

**Chombo, Golat, Mushuk  
pitan (Bal)**

**Note:** The above names are used for all *Aetobatus* and *Aetomylaeus* species occurring in the area.



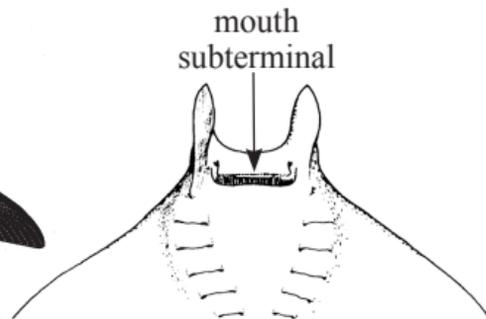
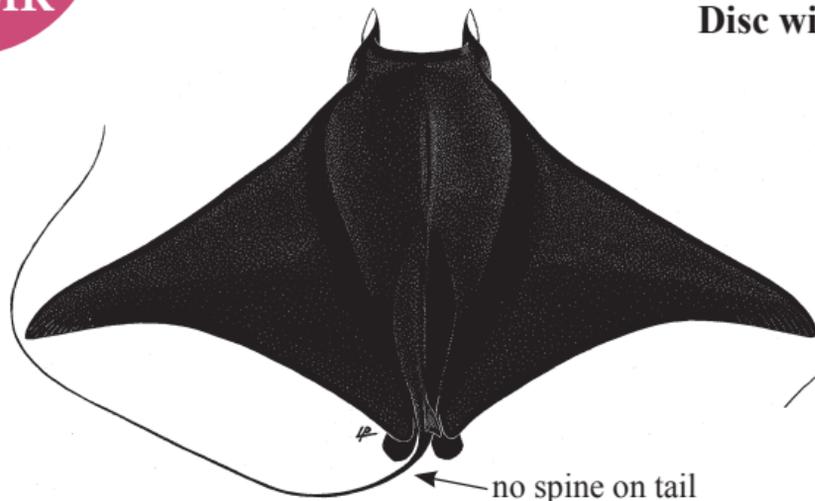
Photo collage



*Mobula kuhlii* (Müller & Henle, 1841)

RMK

Disc width 60-80 cm (max 120 cm)



head (ventral view)

A small devilray with a short head bearing short cephalic fins (<16% DW); dorsal fin often white-tipped; spiracles subcircular, located beneath disc edge; tail of variable size, usually shorter than disc. Dark brown above, white below. **Similar species:** *M. japonica* (tail spine present; tail longer than disc when undamaged); *M. tarapacana* (spiracles slit-like and elliptical, located above disc edge); *M. eregoodootenkee* (cephalic fins >16% DW); *M. thurstoni* (anterior margin of pectoral fins with a distinctive undulated profile); *Manta* spp. (mouth terminal on head). **Habitat:** Inshore pelagic species. Feeds on plankton. **Fishery:** Mostly used as raw material for fish meal.

Local Names

**Karunj (Sin)**

**Karunj (Bal)**

**Note:** The above name is used for all *Mobula* and *Manta* species occurring in the area.

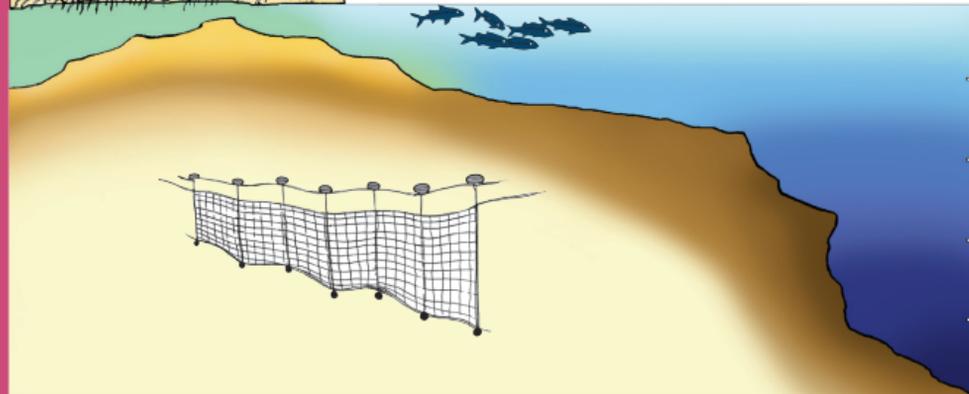


Photo collage

*Mobula kuhlii*



## Card Index:

*Netuma thalassina* – Khagga, Shokiar, Rainji (Sin); Kun, Gallo, Raingi, Kup-a-go, Kun, Bargai (Bal)

*Chirocentrus dorab* – Gairi (Sin); Pashant (Bal)

*Sardinella longiceps* – Luar (Sin); Lujar, Leejar (Bal)

*Tenualosa ilisha* – Palla (Sin); Palwar (Bal)

*Thryssa hamiltonii* – Karari, Karadi, Padan (Sin); Padni (Bal)

*Pomadasys kaakan* – Dhotar (Sin); Kumpo (Bal)

*Lethrinus nebulosus* – Mullah (Sin); Gadeer (Bal)

*Lutjanus argentimaculatus* – Hira (Sin); Kun-la, Ka-nal cha (Bal)

*Lutjanus johnii* – Hira (Sin); Kun-la, Ka-nal cha (Bal)

*Nemipterus japonicus* – Lal-pari, Chakori (Sin); Kolonto (Bal)

*Epinephelus coioides* – Gisser, Mait (Sin); Nambo, Lotari, Komait (Bal)

*Epinephelus diacanthus* – Damba (Sin); Chancho (Bal)

*Acanthopagrus berda* – Kara dandyo, Dandia, Paaloo (Sin); Cha (Bal)

*Argyrops spinifer* – Dand, Kharak paaloo (Sin); Sorro, Malelak, Dand (Bal)

*Argyrosomus heinii* – Sua (Sin); Kir (Bal)

*Otolithes ruber* – Mush-ka (Sin); Pandasi, Mushka (Bal)

*Terapon jarbua* – Ghingra (Sin); Adhi-kulai, Guarak, Kokita (Bal)

*Alepes djedaba* – Para, Bakka (Sin); Bakoi, Bako patar (Bal)  
*Carangoides malabaricus* – Patal, Kak-kar, Kak-kawan (Sin); Pattar, Kak-kawan  
*Decapterus russelli* – Seem, Chumma (Sin); Seem, Chumma (Bal)  
*Megalaspis cordyla* – Bindol, Budki, Binday-wal (Sin); Dar-dumb (Bal)  
*Scomberoides commersonianus* – Aal, Saram (Sin); Saram, Saram gazdani, Saram aanam (Bal)  
*Istiophorus platypterus* – Ghora (Sin); Asp, Hasp (Bal)  
*Aluterus monoceros* – Chappal, Kako, Kookh, Sapna (Sin); Pokki, Khar, Har (Bal)  
*Eleutheronema tetradactylum* – Rawans, Seeri, Photani (Sin); Gwanz (Bal)  
*Rastrelliger kanagurta* – Bangra, Seem (Sin); Bangra, Seem (Bal)  
*Scomberomorus commerson* – Ghore (Sin); Ghore (Bal)  
*Thunnus tonggol* – Dawan (Sin); Aahoor (Bal)  
*Sillago sihama* – Shoor, Ladyfish, Bhambore (Sin); Hashoor (Bal)  
*Sphyrna putnamae* – Kund (Sin); Kund (Bal)

*Coryphaena hippurus* – Aab-rose (Sin); Amrusk, Amlooshk (Bal)  
*Cynoglossus arel* – Chah-ail, Sole (Sin); Mundsar swasso, Zahmay swasso (Bal)  
*Drepane longimana* – Pha-ran, Jalaibi (Sin); Sarando (Bal)  
*Muraenesox cinereus* – Bam (Sin); Sang (Bal)  
*Psettodes erumei* – Hajjam (Sin); Dantani swaso (Bal)  
*Pampus argenteus* – Sufaid poplt, Achopitho, Ghir pitho (Sin); Tighlum, Pitho (Bal)  
*Lepturacanthus savala* – Chind (Sin); Tinji (Bal)

*Penaeus indicus* – Jaira, Saana (Sin); Jaira, Madak, Patas (Bal)  
*Panulirus polyphagus* – Kikat (Sin); Kika (Bal)  
*Charybdis feriatus* – Kaikara (Sin); Kukri (Bal)  
*Sepia pharaonis* – Myyah, Dimiri (Sin); Mus (Bal)  
*Uroteuthis duvaucelii* – Mayyah, Sisi mayyah, Shishi Mayya (Sin); Mus, Mayyah (Bal)  
*Alopias superciliosus* – Poonshirin, Parri (Sin); Dumbi, Mushk (Bal)  
*Isurus oxyrinchus* – Nar manger, Aar (Sin); Nar manger (Bal)  
*Carcharhinus leucas* – Kandri, More (Sin); Bagore Worook, Gwark (Bal)  
*Carcharhinus sorrah* – Karpick, Paggas (Sin); Kanaitar, Paggas (Bal)  
*Iago omanensis* – Chua, Pishik (Sin); Chao (Bal)  
*Rhizoprionodon oligoinx* – Gissi, Pishik, Golden (Sin); Tailago pishik, Sorapi (Bal)  
*Rhina ancylostoma* – Bhuth-khair (Sin); Kobayyadri, Kohbaradri, Baradri (Bal)  
*Glaucostegus cf. granulatus* – Rabba, Kairi, Seerol, Sail, Siroe, Cun-daree (Sin); Zahro (Bal)  
*Himantura gerrardi* – Pittan, Papri (Sin); Pittan, Uthar, Shikki (Bal)  
*Gymnura poecilura* – Bapha, Phappa (Sin); Phappo (Bal)  
*Aetobatus ocellatus* – Magol, Kutti, Cheel (Sin); Chombo, Golat, Mushuk pitan (Bal)  
*Mobula kuhlii* – Karunj (Sin); Karunj (Bal)

**Mini disk contains:**

**Psomadakis, P.N., Osmany, H.B. & Moazzam M.** 2015. *Field identification guide to the marine living resources of Pakistan. FAO Species Identification Guide for Fishery Purposes.* Rome, FAO.

**Fischer, W., Bianchi, G. & Scott, W.B. (eds).** 1984. *FAO species identification sheets for fishery purposes. Western Indian Ocean (Fishing Area 51).* Rome, FAO, vols. I-VI, pag. var..

The FAO FishFinder Programme\* produces species identification tools for fishery purposes. To date, the Programme has described over 8 000 aquatic species and has an archive of more than 40 000 scientifically reviewed species drawings. This information is organized in many publications accessible on the FAO web pages ([www.fao.org/fishery/sidp/en](http://www.fao.org/fishery/sidp/en)).

This FAO FishFinder pocket guide was developed to assist in the quick field identification of important commercial species and can be useful to: ichthyologists; fishery data collectors, observers and inspectors; consumers; fishery science teachers; and everybody interested in the marine fauna and fisheries of Pakistan.

Users must keep in mind that they will encounter many other and often similar marine species in the landings and at markets. To help identify these species a mini disk is included containing more comprehensive FAO identification guides for fishery resources in Pakistan and the Western Indian Ocean.

*\*formerly SIDP, Species Identification and Data Programme*

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