

FAO SPECIES IDENTIFICATION SHEETS

FISHING AREA 51
(W. Indian Ocean)

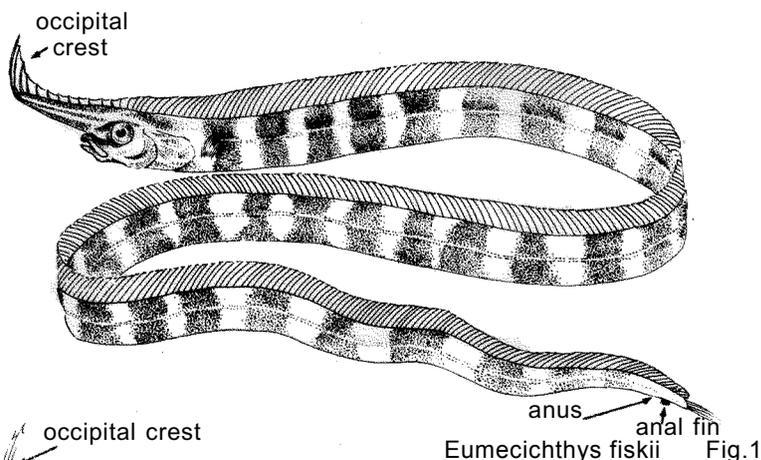
LOPHOTIDAE

Crestfishes

Body elongate, ribbon-like, tapering to caudal fin, with anus located near posterior end of body. Head very peculiar, with a considerably elevated occipital crest bearing the anterior rays of the dorsal fin and extending forward to level of mouth or far beyond; mouth small, weakly protrusible; maxilla extending beyond anterior eye margin; teeth conical, pointed and somewhat depressible, set in 1 to 3 irregular rows in both jaws, some of the anteriors slightly enlarged and curved; a small patch of teeth on vomer (roof of mouth); 6 branchiostegal rays. Dorsal fin long-based, extending backward to caudal fin, with 220 to 263 (Lophotus) or 310 to 392 (Eumecichthys) rays, the anterior ones more or less elongate; anal fin short located near the caudal fin, with 12 to 20 (Lophotus) or 5 to 9 (Eumecichthys) rays; pectoral fins inserted horizontally; pelvic fins, when present, very small, laterally inserted below and slightly posterior to pectorals, with 5 or 6 (Lophotus) and 2 or 3 (Eumecichthys) soft rays; caudal fin short and pointed. Skin smooth, without tubercles; scales very thin, oblong, fragile, cycloid (smooth) and imbricate. Lateral line with smooth plates, terminating on upper portion of caudal fin base. An ink sac discharging into the cloaca.

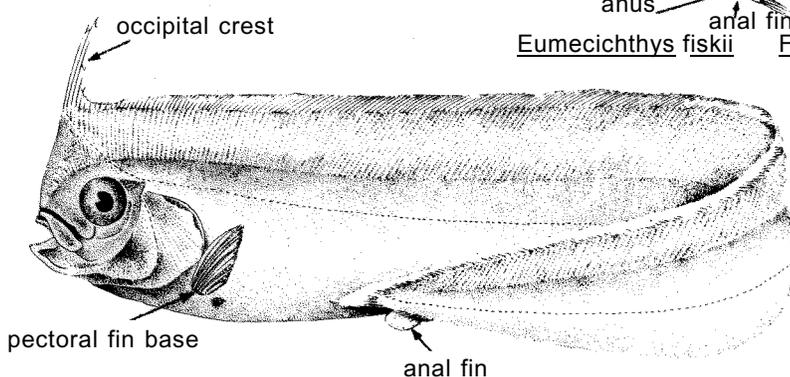
Colour: blue dorsally, fading into white ventrally, with or without brilliant silvery spots (Lophotus) or with numerous dark subvertical bands (Eumecichthys); chest blackish; fins red or pinkish.

Large-sized (at least 2 m total length) mesopelagic fishes, from open waters, ranging in depth to 1 000 m. Only occasionally taken as bycatch in present fisheries. Flesh excellent eating.



KEY TO SPECIES OCCURRING IN THE AREA

1a. Body extremely elongate and slender, its depth contained 18 or more times in standard length; anal fin base much shorter than that of pectoral fin; occipital crest prolonged anteriorly beyond mouth; colour pattern banded (Fig.1) .. Eumecichthys fiskii (Günther, 1890), off South Africa and Japan



1b. Body elongate, its depth 5 to 8 times in standard length; anal fin base longer than that of pectoral fin; occipital crest not prolonged beyond mouth; colour pattern plain or spotted (Fig.2)

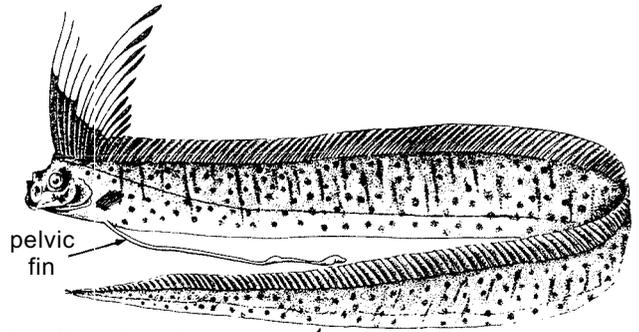
Lophotus capellei (Temminck & Schlegel, 1845), of Western North Atlantic, South Atlantic, South Africa and Pacific

* So far not recorded from Fishing Area 51, but most likely occurring there

SIMILAR FAMILIES OCCURRING IN THE AREA:

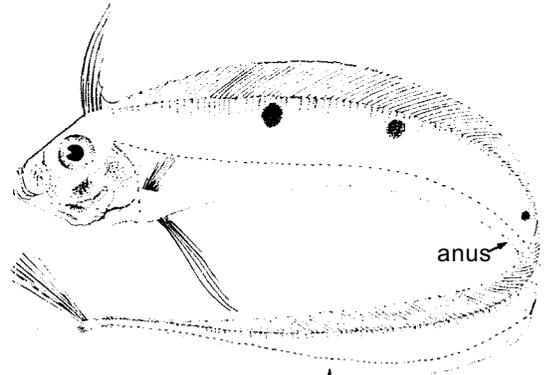
Regalecidae: anal fin absent; anus situated on anterior third of body or further forward; pelvic fins modified into a long filamentous ray; skin roughened by numerous bony tubercles.

Trachipteridae: anal fin absent; anus near middle of body; lateral line plates each with a spine.



Regalecidae (Regalecus)

no anal fin



Trachipteridae (Trachipterus)

no anal fin