

FAO SPECIES IDENTIFICATION SHEETS

FISHING AREA 51
(W. Indian Ocean)

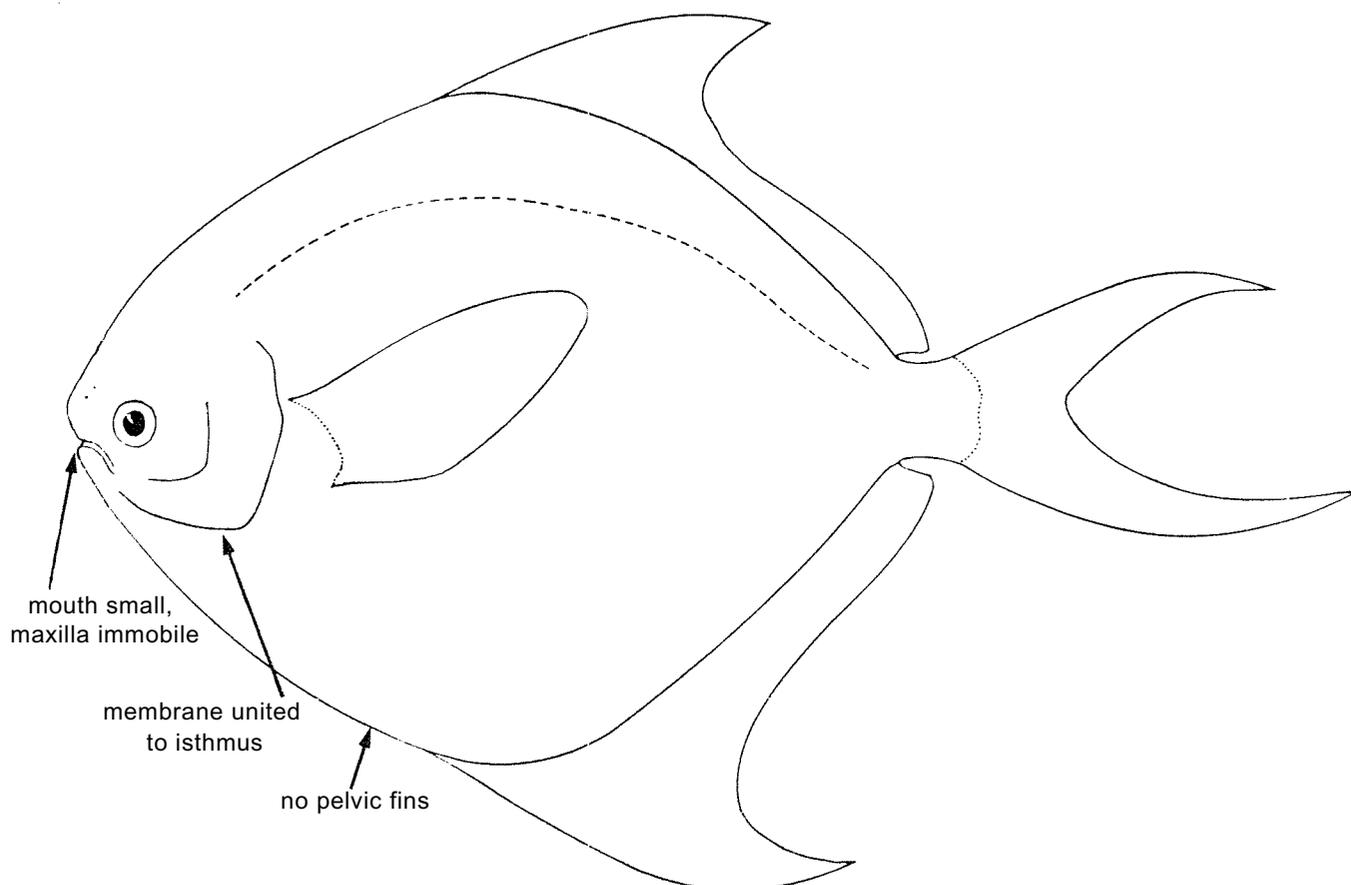
STROMATEIDAE

Butterfishes, fiatolas, silver pomfrets

Body very deep and compressed, caudal peduncle short and compressed, with no keels or scutes. Head deep and broad, snout short and blunt; eyes small, centrally located and surrounded by adipose tissue which extends forward around the large nostrils; mouth sub-terminal, small and curved downward, the maxilla scarcely reaching to below eye, and the angle of gape located before eye; premaxilla not protractile; maxilla immobile, covered with skin and united to cheek; teeth minute, uniserial and flattened, with very small cusps; gill covers very thin, gill membranes broadly united to the isthmus in all Indian Ocean species, gill opening a straight slit. Single dorsal and anal fins, long-based and slightly to deeply falcate, preceded by none or 5 to 10 flat, blade-like spines, pointed on both ends and resembling the ends of free interneurals; pectoral fins long and wing-like; no pelvic fins; caudal fin usually forked, in some species with very extended lobes. Lateral line single, high, following dorsal profile and extending onto caudal peduncle. Scales small, cycloid (smooth) very easily shed; head naked, with prominent canals visible under the thin skin.

Colour: conspicuously silvery with a bluish cast on back; gill membranes and inside of mouth dark.

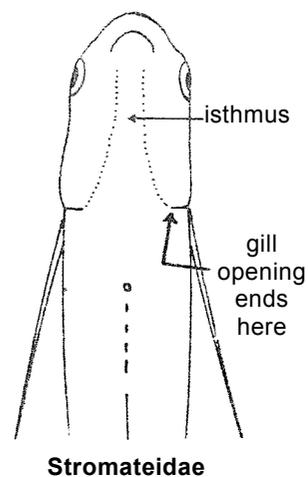
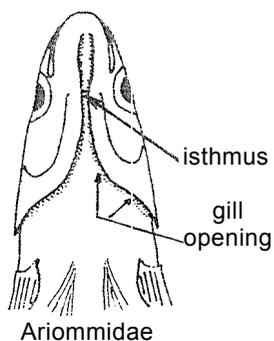
Pomfrets are schooling, pelagic, medium-sized fishes (up to about 60 cm in length) inhabiting shallow waters, generally in coastal areas, sometimes entering estuaries. Soft-bodied coelenterates and pelagic crustaceans are important in their diet. They are usually captured by trawling, and are among the finest of food fishes, and one species in the family (Pampus argenteus) is of significant commercial importance in the area.



SIMILAR FAMILIES OCCURRING IN THE AREA:

Apolectus niger (Carangidae). gill openings normal, gill membranes not broadly united to isthmus; caudal peduncle with lateral keels; colour uniform dark.

Species of Ariommidae, Nomeidae, Carangidae and other silvery compressed fishes: pelvic fins present; gill openings normal.



GENERA OCCURRING IN THE AREA:

Of the three genera in the family, only Pampus is found in the Western Indian Ocean. Stromateus occurs in the Eastern Atlantic and around southern South America and Peprilus occurs along Atlantic and Pacific coasts of the New World.

LIST OF SPECIES OCCURRING IN THE AREA:

Code numbers are given for those species for which Identification Sheets are included

Pampus argenteus (Euphrasen, 1788)

STROM Pamp 1

Pampus chinensis (Euphrasen, 1788)

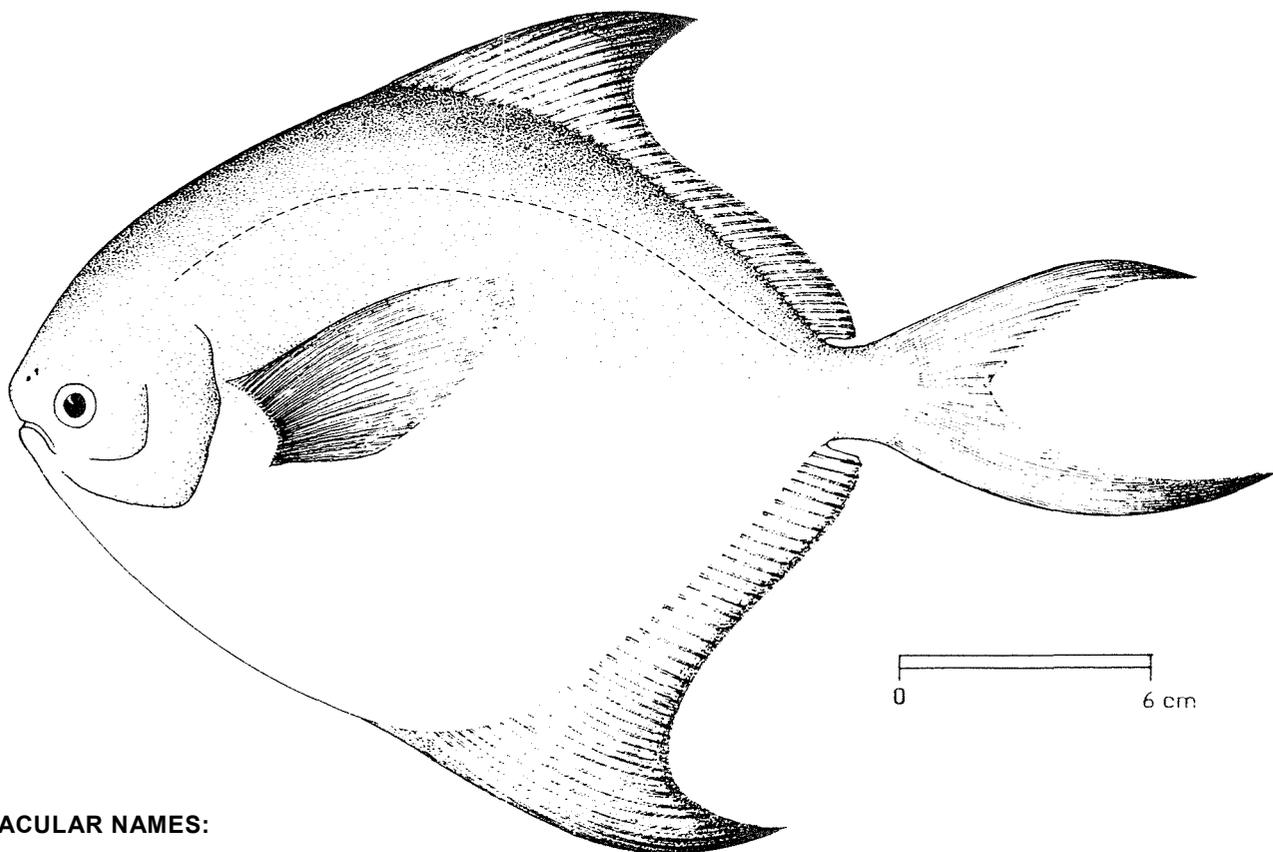
STROM Pamp 2

FAO SPECIES IDENTIFICATION SHEETS

FAMILY : STROMATEIDAE

FISHING AREA 51
(W. Indian Ocean)Pampus argenteus (Euphrasen, 1788)

OTHER SCIENTIFIC NAMES STILL IN USE: None



VERNACULAR NAMES:

FAO : En - Silver pomfret
 Fr - Aileron argenté
 Sp - Palometón platero

NATIONAL:

DISTINCTIVE CHARACTERS:

Body very deep, compressed but fairly thick; caudal peduncle short, deep and compressed, without keels; musculature firm. Mouth small, subterminal and curved downward; maxilla immobile, covered with skin and united to cheek; jaw teeth minute, uniserial and flattened, with a large central cusp and 2 smaller cusps; palate toothless; gill membranes broadly united to isthmus; gill opening a vertical slit covered with a flap of skin; gillrakers 2 to 3 + 8 to 10 on first arch. Dorsal and anal fins subequal in length, originating ahead of mid-body but behind pectoral fin base; preceded by 5 to 10 very low blade-like spines, pointed on both ends and resembling the ends of free interneurals; dorsal finrays 38 to 43, anal finrays 34 to 43; pectoral fins long and wing-like; pelvic fins absent; caudal fin stiff and forked, the lower lobe longer than the upper; anterior rays of median fins, especially the anal fin, and ventral lobe of caudal fin often greatly produced, decidedly falcate. Scales very small, cycloid (smooth), easily shed, and extending onto bases of all fins. Lateral line high, following dorsal profile and extending onto caudal peduncle. Skin thin, canal system clearly visible, particularly as a parallel network on the naked head and nape. Very numerous, small, slender pyloric caeca on the intestine.

Colour: silvery white on the sides and blue to grey on the back. Body covered with small black dots, especially prominent on snout, lower jaw and cheek. Fins yellowish with dark edges. Young silvery.

DISTINGUISHING CHARACTERS OF SIMILAR SPECIES OCCURRING IN THE AREA:

Pampus chinensis: no spines preceding median fins; fins never deeply falcate but the fin-rays gradually and uniformly diminishing in length posteriorly. Usually a smaller fish.

The lack of pelvic fins and the gill membranes broadly united to the isthmus uniquely characterize these fishes. When these characteristics are taken into consideration, no confusions are possible.

SIZE:

Maximum: about 60 cm; common to 30 cm.

GEOGRAPHICAL DISTRIBUTION AND BEHAVIOUR:

Present in the "Gulf" and along the coasts of India. Not found in African waters nor around offshore islands. Eastward it extends to Japan, but not to New Guinea or Australia.

Found in coastal waters at depths between 5 and 80 m. Occurs seasonally in schools over muddy bottoms, associated with prawns, and Nemipterus and Leiognathus species. Schools can be large and abundant. Spawns from late winter through the summer, with greatest intensity during the period from April to June.

Feeds on ctenophores, salps, medusae, and other zooplankton groups.

PRESENT FISHING GROUNDS:

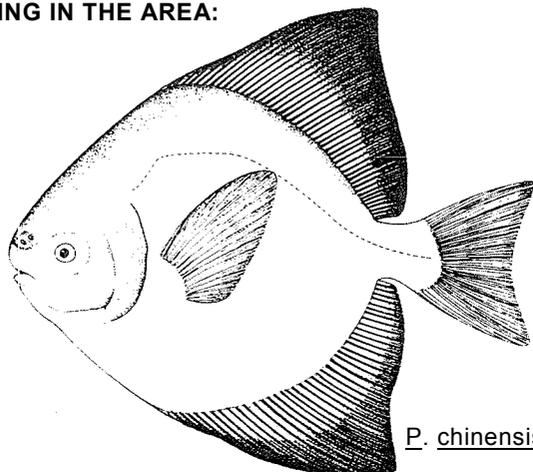
Shelf waters to 80 m depth off Bombay and between the Gulf of Cambay and the Gulf of Kutch (an especially important place), most abundant from October through December. Occurs seasonally (November to February) to the south in the Gulf of Mannar. Abundance varies from year to year.

CATCHES, FISHING GEAR AND FORMS OF UTILIZATION:

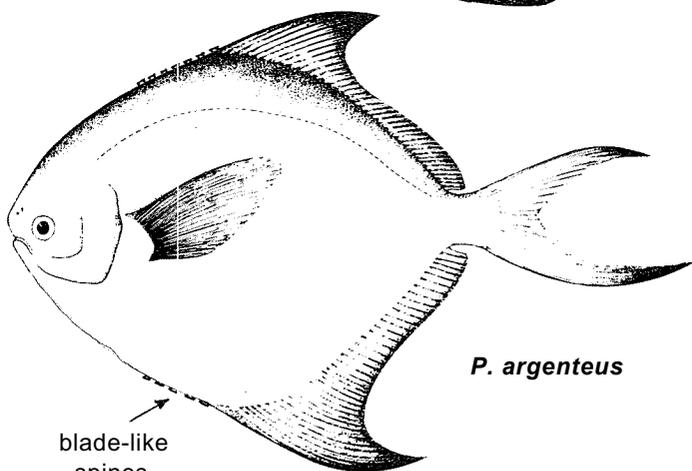
Separate statistics are not reported for this species. Approximately 10 to 25 000 t are estimated to be taken annually in northwestern India.

Caught with bottom trawls and occasionally with gillnets.

Marketed fresh; also shipped frozen to the interior.

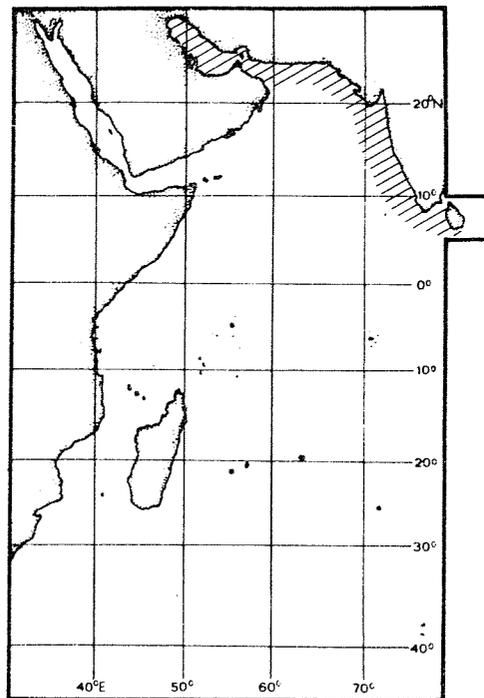


P. chinensis



P. argenteus

blade-like spines

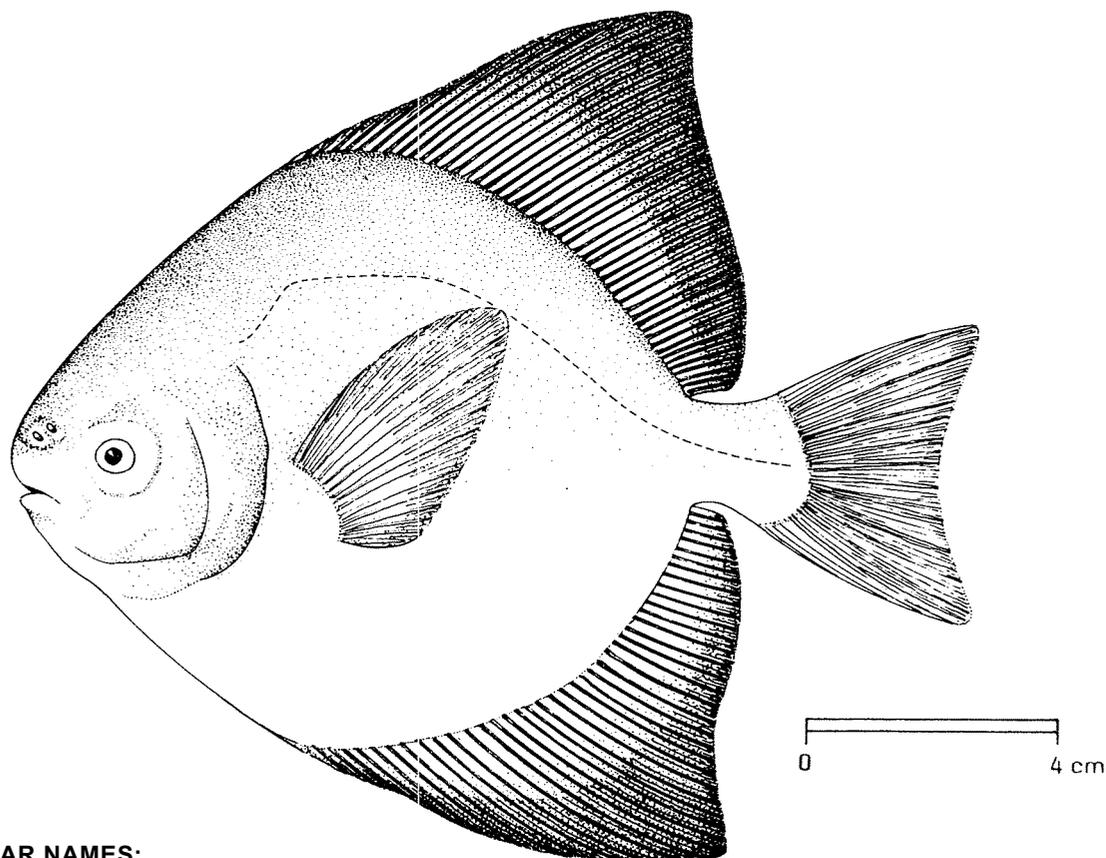


FAO SPECIES IDENTIFICATION SHEETS

FAMILY: STROMATEIDAE

FISHING AREA 51
(W. Indian Ocean)Pampus chinensis (Euphrasen, 1788)

OTHER SCIENTIFIC NAMES STILL IN USE: None



VERNACULAR NAMES:

FAO: En - Chinese silver pomfret (= Chinese pomfret, Fishing Areas 57/71, 1974)
Fr - Aileron chinois
Sp - Palometón chino

NATIONAL:

DISTINCTIVE CHARACTERS:

Body very deep, compressed; caudal peduncle very short, deep and compressed, without keels; musculature firm. Mouth small, curved downward; maxilla immobile covered with skin and united to cheek; jaw teeth minute, uniserial and flattened, with a large central cusp and 2 smaller cusps; palate toothless; snout obtuse; gill membranes broadly united to isthmus; gill opening a straight vertical slit covered with a flap of skin. Dorsal and anal fins subequal in length, originating at level of or behind pectoral fin bases, no spines ahead of fins; dorsal finrays 43 to 50, anal finrays 39 to 42; pectoral fins broad; pelvic fins absent; caudal fin broad and only slightly forked; rays of median fins increasing and then diminishing gradually in length to produce an approximately vertical margin at posterior border of the fins, never falcate. Scales small, cycloid (smooth), easily shed and extending onto bases of all fins. Lateral line high, following dorsal profile and extending onto caudal peduncle. Skin thin.

Colour: grey to brown on the back, silvery white on sides; small black dots cover entire body; fins yellowish to dusky.

DISTINGUISHING CHARACTERS OF SIMILAR SPECIES OCCURRING IN THE AREA:

Pampus argenteus: 5 to 10 flat blade-like spines preceding the median fins; fins falcate. Usually a larger fish.

The lack of pelvic fins and the gill membranes broadly united to the isthmus uniquely characterize these fishes. When these characteristics are taken into consideration, no confusions are possible.

SIZE:

Maximum: about 40 cm; common to 20 cm.

GEOGRAPHICAL DISTRIBUTION AND BEHAVIOUR:

Coastal waters of India and eastward to China, but not to New Guinea or Australia.

Occurs seasonally singly or in small schools over muddy bottoms; may enter estuaries.

Feeds on ctenophores, salps, medusae, and other zooplankton groups.

PRESENT FISHING GROUNDS:

Shelf waters to 80 m off Bombay and between the Gulf of Cambay and the Gulf of Kutch. Taken in Kerala from June to September. Abundance varies from year to year, but never present in great numbers.

CATCHES, FISHING GEAR AND FORMS OF UTILIZATION:

Separate statistics are not reported for this species; its importance is insignificant in comparison to that of the other silver pomfret, P. argenteus, which makes up the bulk of the catch.

Taken with bottom trawls and occasionally with gillnets.

Marketed fresh.

