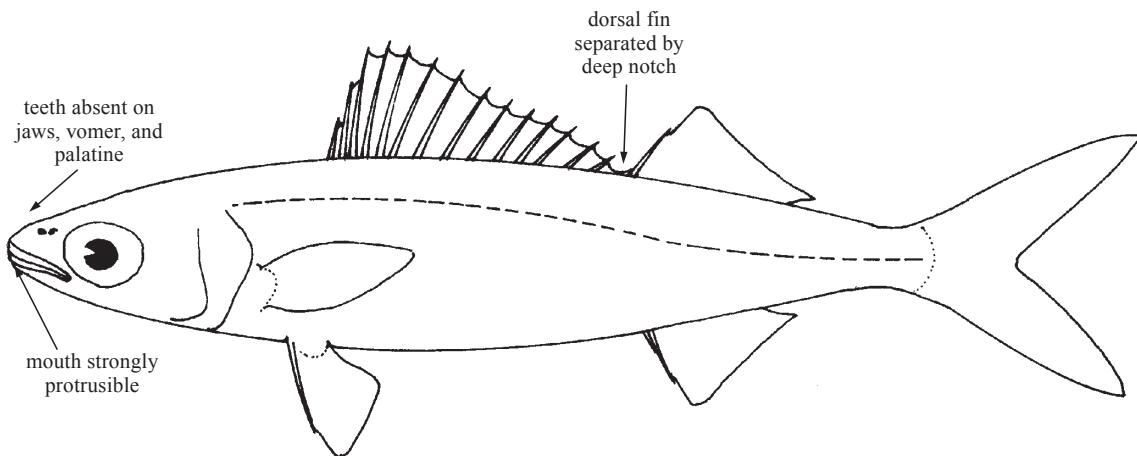


**INERMIIDAE****Bonnetmouths**

by T.M. Orrell, National Marine Fisheries Service, National Museum of Natural History, Washington D.C., USA

**Diagnostic characters:** Small (to 25 cm), with elongate, fusiform body and **highly protractile upper jaw**. The open mouth can be extended greatly forward and downward. **Dorsal fins separated by a deep notch** (widely separated in *Emmelichthyops*); the second spines connected by an interradiar membrane. First dorsal fin with 9 or 10 spines (*Emmelichthyops*) or 14 to 17 spines (*Inermia*) and second dorsal fin with 2 spines and 10 or 9 soft rays, respectively. Anal fin with 3 spines and 8 or 10 soft rays. Caudal fin deeply forked. **Teeth absent on jaws, vomer, and palatine**. Two enlarged chin pores. **Colour:** silvery blue with thin stripes or green to yellow with thin stripes.



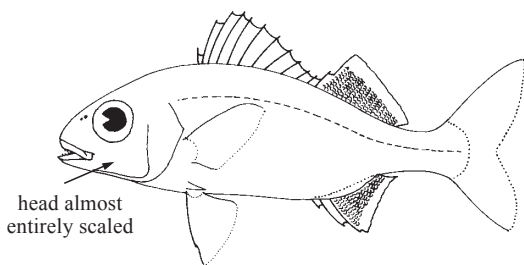
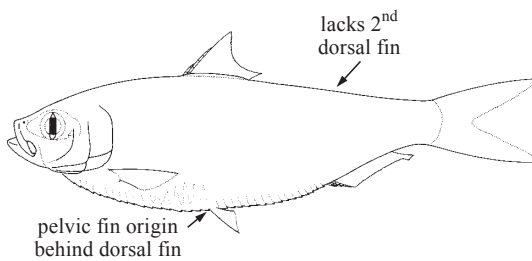
**Habitat, biology, and fisheries:** Bonnetmouths are tropical species restricted to the western Atlantic and are found schooling in open waters and near oceanic islands and coral heads. They are plankton feeders and are of minimal commercial importance, but are occasionally taken by artisanal fisheries and sold fresh. There are no fisheries statistics available for these species.

**Similar families occurring in the area**

None of the similar families occurring in the area have extremely protractile jaws that lack teeth. Additional distinguishing characters of these families are:

Haemulidae: head almost entirely scaled, except snout, lips, and chin.

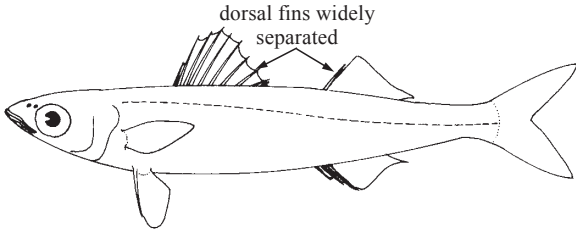
Clupeidae: lacks second dorsal fin; pelvic-fin origin behind dorsal fin.

**Haemulidae****Clupeidae**

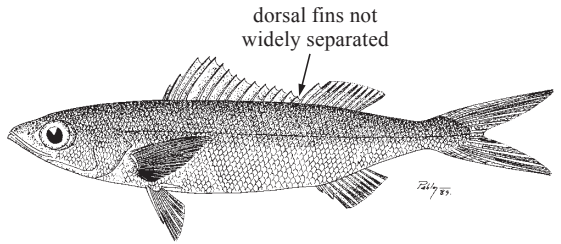
**Key to the species of Inermiidae occurring in the area**

**1a.** Distance between first and second dorsal fins widely separated (Fig. 1). . . . . *Emmelichthyops atlanticus*

**1b.** First and second dorsal fins not widely separated (Fig. 2) . . . . . *Inermia vittata*




**Fig. 1** *Emmelichthyops atlanticus*



**Fig. 2** *Inermia vittata*

**List of species occurring in this area**

The symbol  is given when species accounts are included.

 *Emmelichthyops atlanticus* Schultz, 1945.

 *Inermia vittata* Poey, 1860.

**References**

Böhlke, J.E. and C.C.G. Chaplin. 1993. *Fishes of the Bahamas and adjacent tropical waters*. 2nd edition. University of Texas Press, Austin, 771 p.

Cervigón, F., R. Cipriani, W. Fischer, L. Garibaldi, M. Hendrickx, A.J. Lemus, R. Márquez, J.M. Poutiers, G. Robaina, and B. Rodríguez. 1993. *FAO species identification sheets for fishery purposes. Field guide to the commercial marine and brackish-water resources of the northern coast of South America*. Rome, FAO, 513 p.

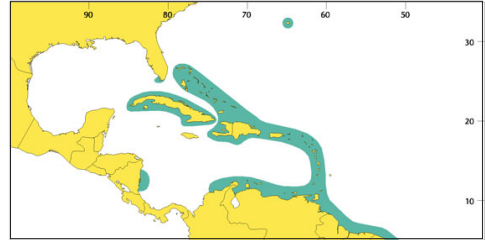
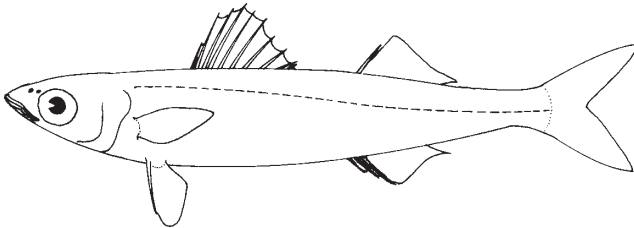
Smith-Vaniz, B.B. Collette, and B.E. Luckhurst. 1999. Fishes of Bermuda: History, Zoogeography, Annotated Checklist, and Identification Keys. *American Society of Ichthyologists and Herpetologists, Special Publication 4*:424 p.

*Emmelichthys atlanticus* Schultz, 1945

IEZ

**En** - Bonnetmouth.

Pelagic oceanic, of no interest to fisheries because of small average size less than 25 cm. Rapid schooling fish, found around patch reefs, coral heads, and over sand bottoms. Bermuda, Florida Keys, Bahamas, Virgin Islands, Nicaragua, and northern South America.



*Inermia vittata* Poey, 1860

IIV

**En** - Boga; **Fr** - Boga; **Sp** - Boga.

Maximum size to 25 cm, common to 18 cm. Coastal schooling fish found in midwaters. Bermuda, Florida to Bahamas, Belize, and northern South America.

