FIST
1982

FAO SPECIES IDENTIFICATION SHEETS

FISHING AREA 51
(W. Indian Ocean)

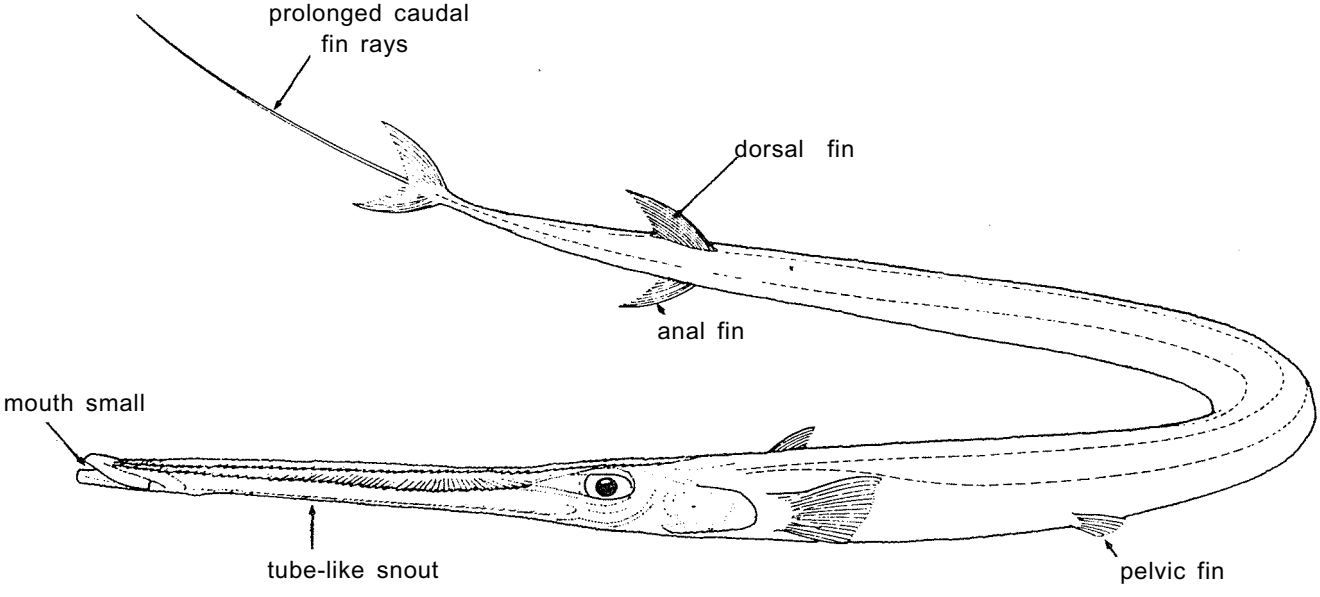
FISTULARIIDAE

Cornetfishes, flutemouths

Body elongate and depressed. Mouth small, at end of a long tubular snout hexagonal in cross section; teeth in jaws small. Dorsal and anal fins short-based and opposite, with 14 to 17 segmented soft rays; pectoral fins with 13 to 17 rays; pelvic fins small and abdominal, with 6 rays. Lateral line arched, running anteriorly along back, then bending downward on side and continuing posteriorly onto an elongate filament produced by the middle 2 caudal fin rays, the line composed of tube-shaped ossifications that gradually take the form of long bony shields sometimes bearing sharp spines. Body of juveniles covered with rows of small spinules which are retained in the adults of only one Western Indian species (F. petimba); a row of elongate bony plates may be present along dorsal and ventral midlines of body just anterior to dorsal and/or anal fin. Total number of vertebrae 76 to 85, with the first 4 elongate and fused.

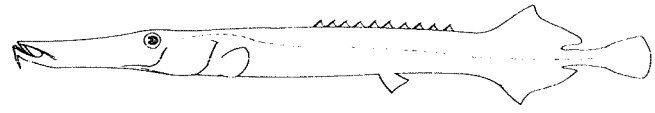
Colour: variable with the species; either red to orange-brown above and silvery below, or brownish-olive above, lighter below, with a series of blue spots on back and snout.

Large fishes, reaching up to about 2 m in total length. F. petimba is typically found in coastal areas over soft bottoms, usually at depths greater than 10 m. F. commersoni is most often seen in seagrass beds and coral reefs. Cornetfishes feed on small fishes and shrimps. Although not important in the commercial fishery of the area, they are frequently taken in trawls and by various types of artisanal gear and may appear in local fish markets. Although edible, they are most often used for fishmeal.



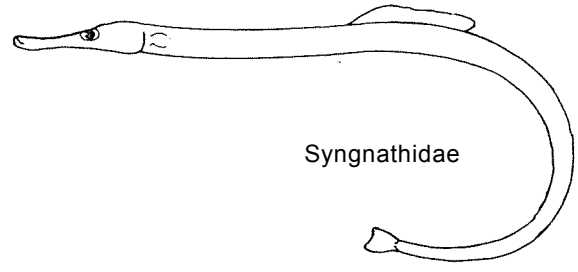
SIMILAR FAMILIES OCCURRING IN THE AREA:

Aulostomidae: no caudal filament; barbel present on lower jaw; body compressed rather than depressed; distinct separate spines anterior to soft dorsal fin.



Aulostomidae

Syngnathidae: smaller; body covered with armour; anal fin reduced or absent; caudal filament absent.

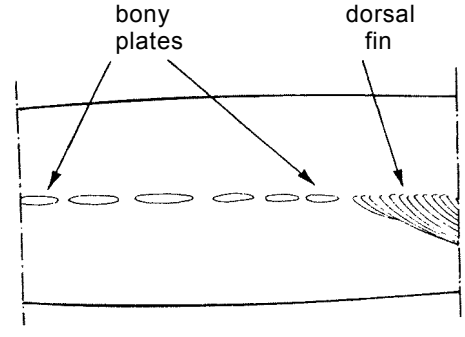


Syngnathidae

KEY TO SPECIES OCCURRING IN THE AREA:

1a. A row of elongate bony plates embedded in skin along midline of back anterior to dorsal fin (Fig. 1); posterior lateral-line ossifications ending in a sharp spine; immaculate red or brown above ..... Fistularia petimba

1b. No elongate bony plates along midline of back; posterior lateral-line ossifications without a spine; rows of blue spots on back, sides and snout ..... Fistularia



sector of back in front of dorsal fin

Fig.1

LIST OF SPECIES OCCURRING IN THE AREA:

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

Fistularia petimba Lacépède, 1803	FIST Fist 1
Fistularia commersonii Rüppell, 1835	FIST Fist 3

Prepared by R.A. Fritzsche, Department of Fisheries, Humboldt State University, Arcata, California, USA

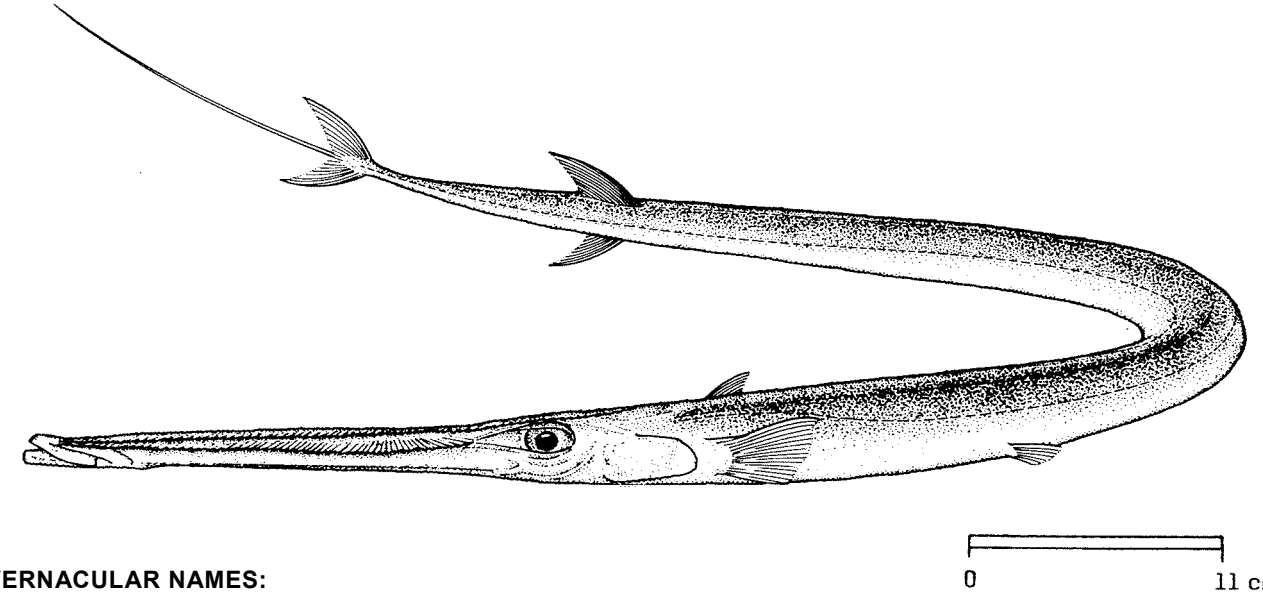
FAO SPECIES IDENTIFICATION SHEETS

FAMILY: FISTULARIIDAE

FISHING AREA 51
(W. Indian Ocean)

Fistularia petimba Lacépède, 1803

OTHER SCIENTIFIC NAMES STILL IN USE : Fistularia serrata Cuvier, 1817
Fistularia villosa Klunzinger, 1871



VERNACULAR NAMES:

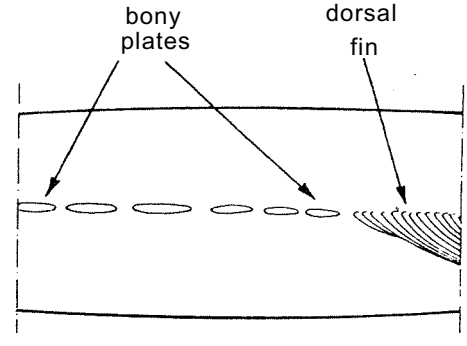
FAO :
En - Red cornetfish
Fr - Cornette rouge
Sp - Corneta colorada

NATIONAL:

DISTINCTIVE CHARACTERS:

Body elongate and depressed. Mouth at end of a long, tubular snout, hexagonal in cross section; teeth in jaws small; ridges on snout with antrorse (forward-pointing) serrations, the upper ridges parallel; interorbital space narrow and nearly flat. Dorsal and anal fins short-based and opposite, with 14 to 16 segmented (soft) rays; pectoral fins with 15 or 16 rays; pelvic fins small and abdominal, with 6 rays. Lateral line arched, running anteriorly almost along middle of back, then bending down to middle of sides and continuing posteriorly onto an elongate filament produced by the middle 2 caudal fin rays; posterior lateral-line ossifications bearing sharp, retrorse (backward-pointing) spines. A row of elongate bon plates present on midlines of body just anterior to dorsal and/or anal fin; spinules in skin well developed at all sizes. Vertebrae 76, the first 4 elongate and fused.

Colour: in life red to orange-brown above, silvery below; fin vertical fins also have an orange cast.



sector of back in front
of dorsal

DISTINGUISHING CHARACTERS OF SIMILAR SPECIES OCCURRING IN THE AREA:

Fistularia commersonii: no elongate bony plates along midline of back; posterior lateral line ossifications without spines; rows of blue spots or lines on back.

SIZE:

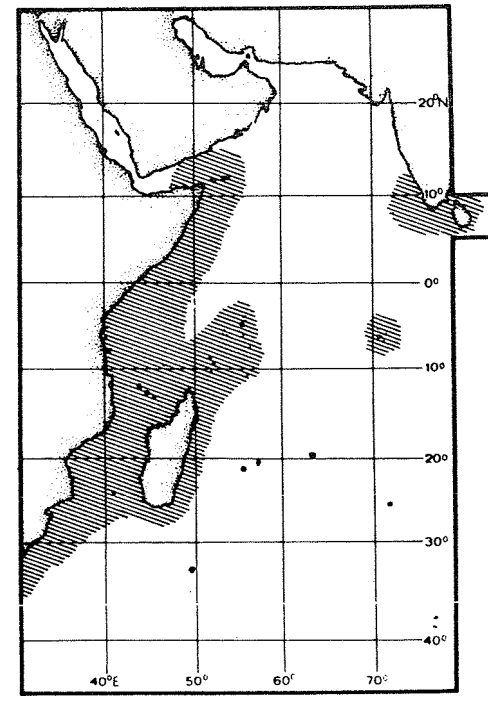
Maximum: 200 cm; common to 100 cm.

GEOGRAPHICAL DISTRIBUTION AND BEHAVIOUR:

In the Western Indian, along the east coast of Africa from the Red Sea southward including Madagascar, the Maldives, southern India and Sri Lanka. Also in the tropical Atlantic and Western Pacific to Hawaii and to Japan and southern Australia.

Found in coastal areas over soft bottoms, usually at depths greater than 10 m.

Feeds on small fishes and shrimps.



PRESENT FISHING GROUNDS:

No special fishery, but caught frequently in bottom trawls and in artisanal fisheries

CATCHES, FISHING GEAR AND FORMS OF UTILIZATION:

Separate statistics are not reported for this species.

Caught with bottom trawls, gillnets and line gear.

Utilized fresh, dried salted or smoked, also reduced to fishmeal.

FIST Fist 3

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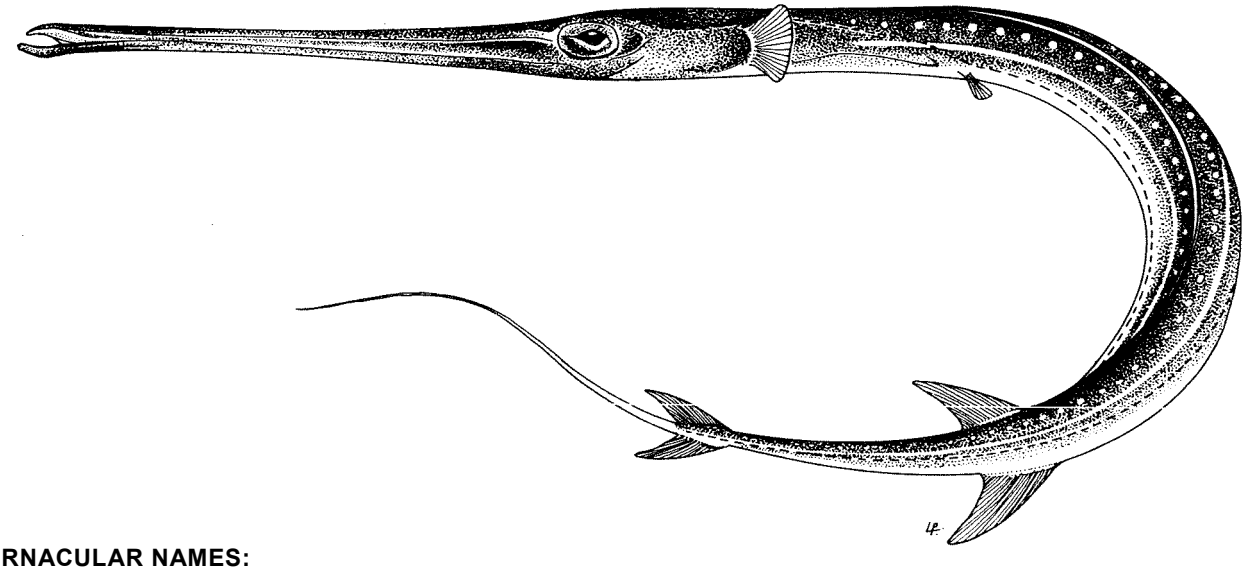
FAO SPECIES IDENTIFICATION SHEETS

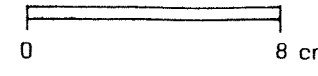
FAMILY: FISTULARIIDAE

FISHING AREA 51
(W. Indian Ocean)

Fistularia commersonii Rüppell, 1835

OTHER SCIENTIFIC NAMES STILL IN USE : Fistularia petimba (non Lacépède, 1803)





VERNACULAR NAMES:

FAO : En - Bluespotted cornetfish
Fr - Cornette à taches bleues
Sp - Corneta pintada

NATIONAL:

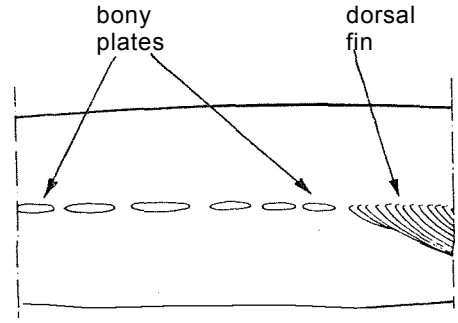
DISTINCTIVE CHARACTERS:

Body elongate and depressed. Mouth at end of a long, tubular snout, hexagonal in cross section; teeth in jaws small; ridges on snout with antrorse serrations, the upper ridges diverging anteriorly; interorbital space flat. Dorsal and anal fins short-based and opposite, with 14 to 16 anal and 15 to 17 dorsal segmented (soft) rays; pectoral fins with 13 or 15 rays; pelvic fins small and abdominal, with 6 rays. Lateral line arched, running anteriorly almost along middle of back, then bending down to side and continuing posteriorly onto an elongate filament produced by the middle 2 caudal fin rays; posterior lateral line ossifications without spines. Body covered in juveniles with rows of small spinules which become obsolete in adults. Vertebrae 84 or 85, the first 4 elongate and fused.

Colour: brownish to olive above, becoming lighter to silvery below; a pair of blue stripes or a row of blue spots along back; dorsal and anal fins with an orange cast becoming transparent at base; caudal filament white.

DISTINGUISHING CHARACTERS OF SIMILAR SPECIES OCCURRING IN THE AREA:

Fistularia petimba: elongate bony plates embedded in skin along midline of back; posterior lateral line ossifications ending in a short spine; immaculate red or brown above, without blue spots.



sector of back in front of dorsal fin

F. petimba

SIZE:

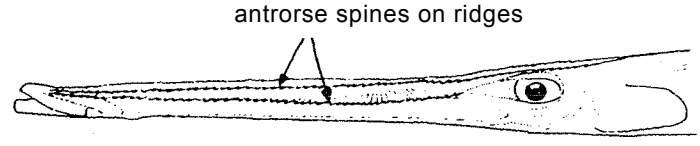
Maximum: about 160 cm; common to 100 cm.

GEOGRAPHICAL DISTRIBUTION AND BEHAVIOUR:

In the Western Indian, along the east coast of Africa from the Red Sea southward to the Maldives and southern India and Sri Lanka. Also found throughout the tropical Indo-Pacific Ocean to America and to Japan and Australia.

Most common in seagrass beds and coral reefs in shallow water.

Feeds on small fishes and shrimps.



F. petimba

PRESENT FISHING GROUNDS:

No special fishery, but taken frequently in trawls and artisanal fisheries.

CATCHES, FISHING GEAR AND FORMS OF UTILIZATION:

Separate statistics are not reported for this species.

Caught with bottom trawls, gillnets and line gear.

Utilized fresh, dried salted or smoked; also reduced to fishmeal.