

FAO SPECIES IDENTIFICATION SHEETS

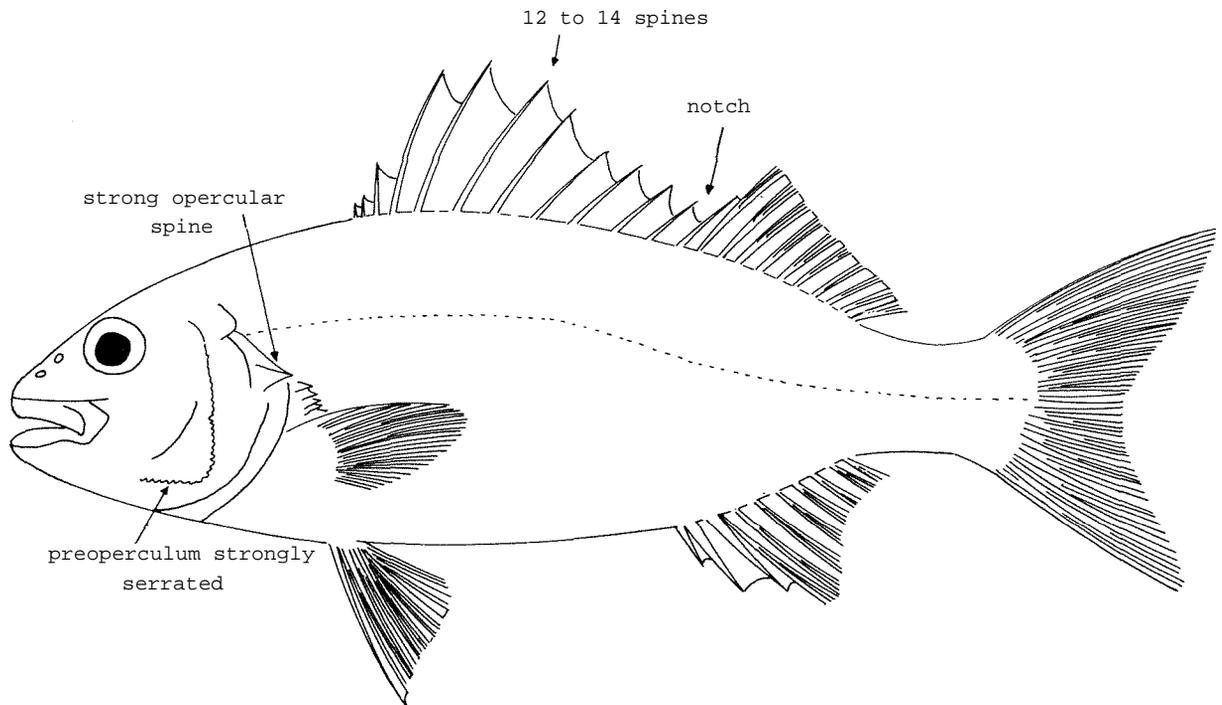
FISHING AREAS 57,71
(E Ind. Ocean)
(W Cent. Pacific)

THERAPONIDAE

Therapons, therapon-perches

Small perch-like fishes with an oblong, compressed body. Mouth small or moderate, upper jaw not reaching beyond eye centre; jaw teeth in villiform bands, the outer series larger or enlarged and comprising conical, incisor-like, or 3-cusped teeth; vomer and palatine (roof of mouth) teeth small, or absent. Pre-operculum with sharply serrated edge; operculum with 1 or 2 strong spines. A single dorsal fin with spinous and soft portions sometimes partially separated by a notch and 12 to 14 strong spines, the 4th and 5th the longest; pelvic fin base behind base of pectoral fin, no axillary scale; caudal fin forked. Scales ctenoid (rough to touch), lateral line single, complete.

Colour: often, dark longitudinal bands on grey or brown body, and dark stripes on caudal fin.



SIMILAR FAMILIES OCCURRING IN THE AREA:

Serranidae: mouth large, upper jaw usually reaching to below hind margin of eye; also, caudal fin usually rounded and 3 spines on operculum.

Kuhliidae: have 10 dorsal spines (12 to 14 in Theraponidae).

Key to Genera

- 1 a. Head short, its length more than 4 times in standard length; outer teeth in both jaws enlarged, flattened and often with 3 cusps or lobes (Fig. 1) *Helotes*
- 1 b. Head longer, its length less than 4 times in standard length; outer teeth in both jaws with conical tips
- 2 a. Jaw teeth in a villiform band; gill membrane free from isthmus (Fig. 2) *Therapon*
- 2 b. Jaw teeth in 2 or 3 rows, outer series enlarged, brown-tipped; gill membrane joined to isthmus (Fig. 3) *Pelates*

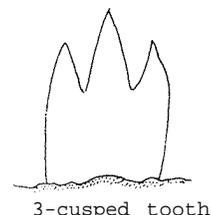


Fig. 1

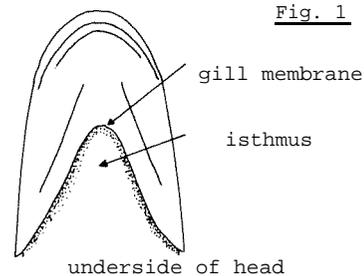


Fig. 2

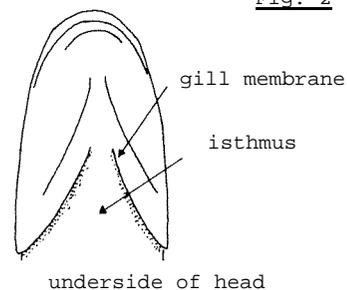


Fig. 3

List of Species occurring in the Area
(Code numbers are given for those species for which Identification Sheets are included)

<i>Helotes sexlineatus</i>	THER Helo 1	<i>Therapon argenteus</i>	
		<i>Therapon cancellatus</i>	
<i>Pelates oxyrhynchus</i>	THER Pela 1	<i>Therapon caudavittatus</i>	
<i>Pelates quadrilineatus</i>	THER Pela 2	<i>Therapon jarbua</i>	THER Ther 1
<i>Pelates romeri</i>		<i>Therapon puta</i>	
		<i>Therapon rosenberghi</i>	
<i>Therapon adamsoni</i>		<i>Therapon theraps</i>	THER Ther 2

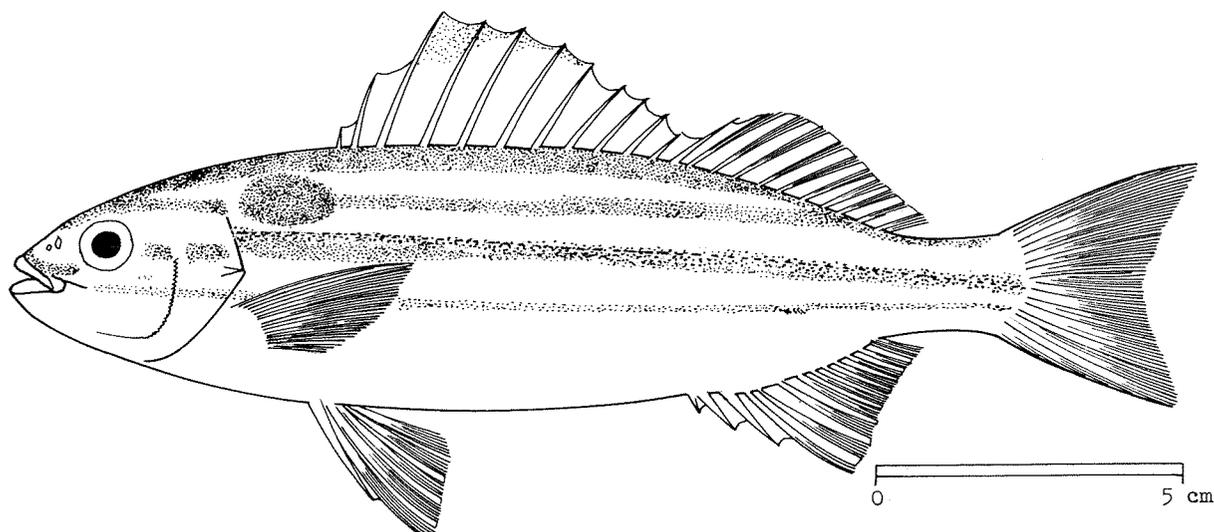
(also, some 15 nominal species from Australian waters, their status uncertain)

FAO SPECIES IDENTIFICATION SHEETS

FAMILY: THERAPONIDAE

FISHING AREAS 57,71
(E Ind. Ocean)
(W Cent. Pacific)*Helotes sexlineatus* (Quoy & Gaimard, 1824)

SYNONYMS STILL IN USE: None



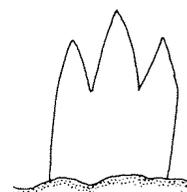
VERNACULAR NAMES

FAO: En - Sixlined therapon
Fr -
Sp -

NATIONAL:

DISTINCTIVE CHARACTERS:

A small species, body elongate and compressed, head short, its length more than 4 times in standard length. Mouth small, slightly oblique, upper jaw ending well in advance of eye; jaw teeth in many series, compressed and with 3 cusps or lobes; palate toothless. Opercular spine strong, edge of pre-operculum serrated. Dorsal fin with 11 to 12 spines and 10 to 11 soft rays; 3rd spine longest; spinous and soft parts demarcated by a conspicuous notch; anal fin with 3 spines and 10 to 11 soft rays; 2nd spine about half the length of 3rd spine; caudal fin with a shallow fork. Scales small, ctenoid (rough), about 14 rows above lateral line.



3-cusped tooth

Colour: back light greenish brown, sides silvery white; body with 4 to 6 horizontal bands, 2 of which often indistinct; a blackish brown blotch behind upper end of gill opening; tip of spinous part of dorsal fin light grey.

DISTINGUISHING CHARACTERS OF SIMILAR SPECIES OCCURRING IN THE AREA:

Pelates species: outer jaw teeth conical, brown-tipped, in 2 or 3 series; head longer, less than 4 times in standard length; also, scales larger, 10 to 13 rows above lateral line (about 14 in *H. sexlineatus*).

Therapon species: outer jaw teeth conical, little enlarged.

SIZE:

Maximum: 30 cm; common: 15 to 20 cm.

GEOGRAPHICAL DISTRIBUTION AND BEHAVIOUR:

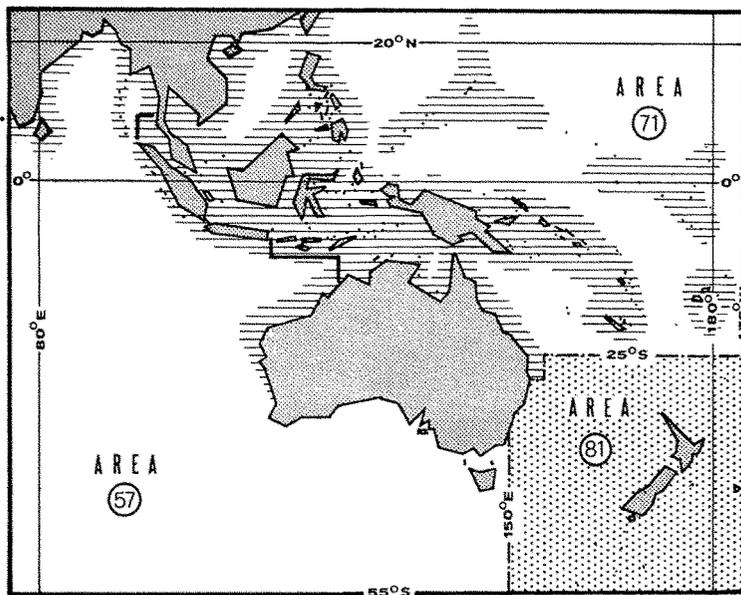
Throughout northern part of area and southward to New South Wales (Australia).

Found in inshore waters.

Feeds on invertebrates and fishes.

PRESENT FISHING GROUNDS:

Throughout its range.



CATCHES, MAIN FISHING GEAR AND PRINCIPAL FORMS OF UTILIZATION:

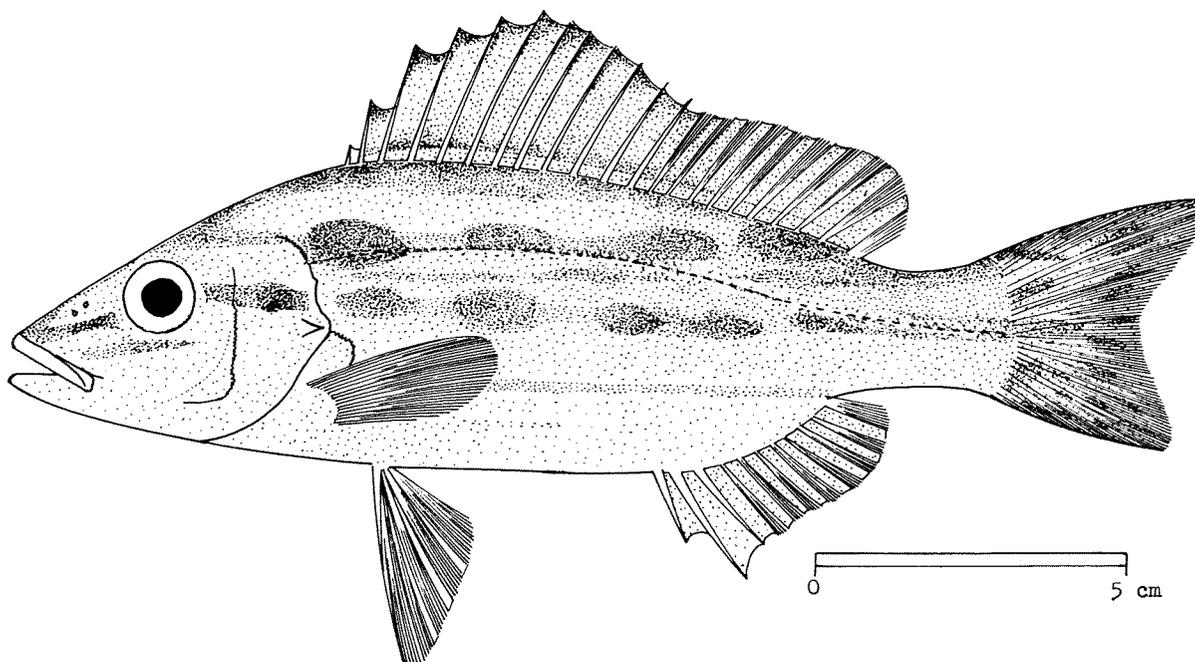
Separate statistics are not reported for this species.

Caught with all types of inshore fishing gear.

Marketed mostly fresh.

FAO SPECIES IDENTIFICATION SHEETS

FAMILY: THERAPONIDAE

FISHING AREAS 57,71
(E Ind. Ocean)
(W Cent. Pacific)*Pelates oxyrhynchus* (Temminck & Schlegel, 1842)SYNONYMS STILL IN USE: *Therapon oxyrhynchus*: Chan, 1968

VERNACULAR NAMES:

FAO: En - Blotched therapon
Fr -
Sp -

NATIONAL:

DISTINCTIVE CHARACTERS:

A small species, body oblong and compressed, with a long, pointed snout. Mouth small, slightly oblique; upper jaw ending well in front of eye; jaw teeth compressed, with tips brown, conical, 3 series in upper jaw and 2 in lower jaw; vomer and palatine (roof of mouth) toothless. Opercular spine strong and pungent, edge of preoperculum serrated. Dorsal fin with 12 spines and 10 rays; 5th to 8th spines longest; spinous and soft parts not separated by a notch; anal fin with 3 spines and 8 rays, 2nd spine longer than 3rd; caudal fin with a shallow fork. Scales small, ctenoid (rough), 10 to 13 rows above lateral line.

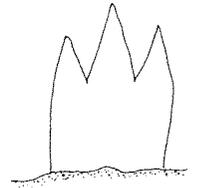
Colour: back light brown, sides paler; body with 4 to 5 brownish red bands and elongate, darker blotches along every other band; dorsal fin without dark blotches, but with a dusky black band along its base; membrane of soft part of dorsal fin and of caudal fin with irregular short dark blotches.

DISTINGUISHING CHARACTERS OF SIMILAR SPECIES OCCURRING IN THE AREA:

Pelates quadrilineatus: snout short and rounded, body with distinct brown longitudinal bands.

Therapon species: outer jaw teeth hardly enlarged, not brown-tipped; also, mouth and gill cavity pale brown (red in *Pelates quadrilineatus*).

Helotes species: outer jaw teeth with 3 cusps or lobes and head short, 4 times in standard length; also, scales smaller, about 14 rows above lateral line (10 to 13 in *P. oxyrhynchus*).



3-cusped tooth

SIZE:

Maximum: 30 cm; common: 15 to 20 cm.

GEOGRAPHICAL DISTRIBUTION AND BEHAVIOUR:

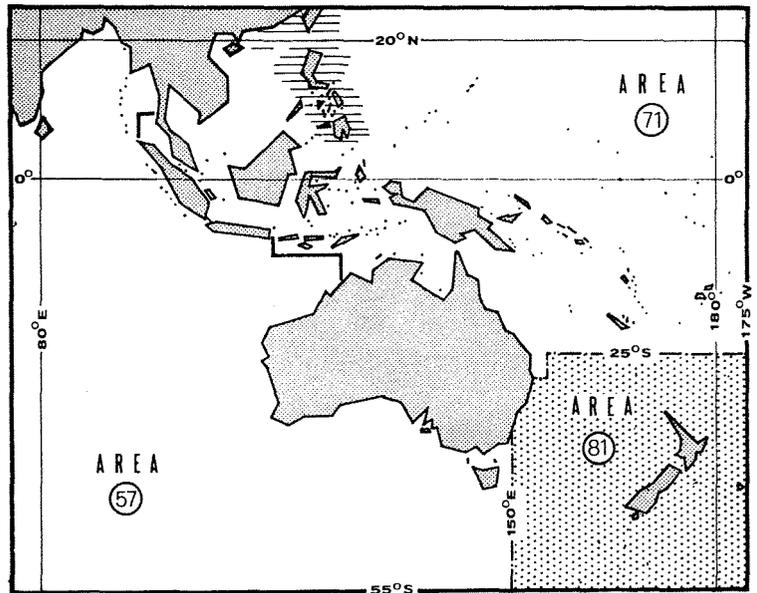
Philippines and South China Sea; also, northward to Japan.

Found in inshore waters, often brackish; the young enter freshwaters.

Feeds on invertebrates and fishes.

PRESENT FISHING GROUNDS:

Throughout its range.



CATCHES, MAIN FISHING GEAR AND PRINCIPAL FORMS OF UTILIZATION:

Separate statistics are not reported for this species.

Caught with traps, handlines and other inshore fishing gear.

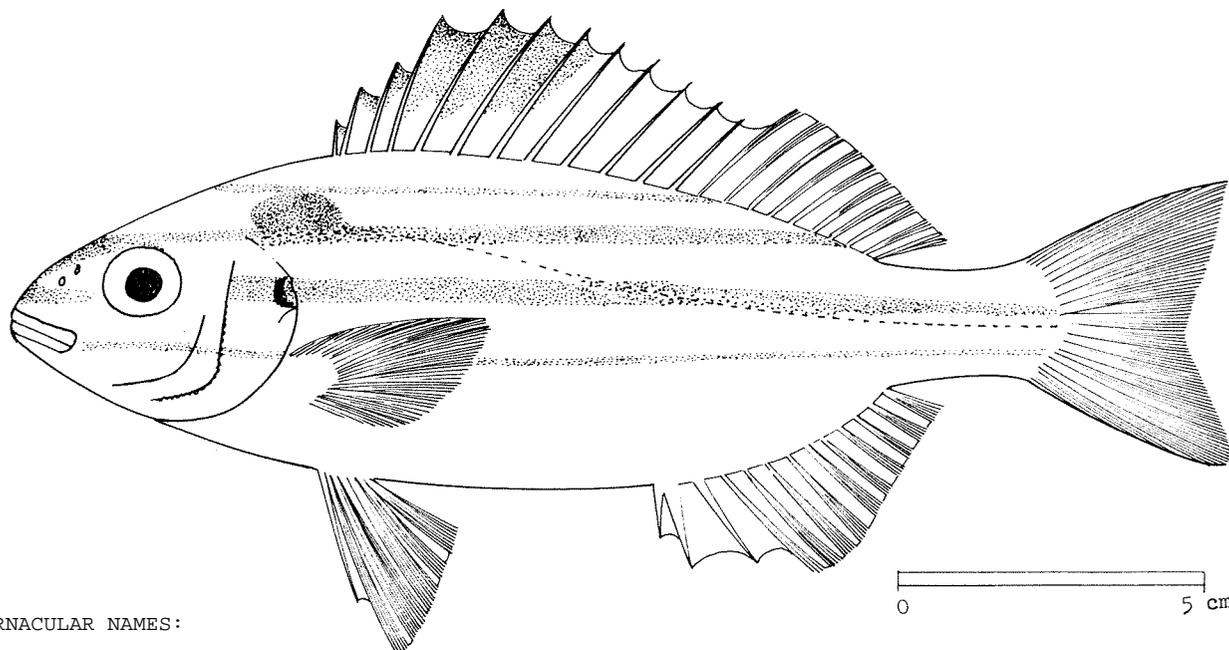
Marketed mostly fresh.

FAO SPECIES IDENTIFICATION SHEETS

FAMILY: THERAPONIDAE

FISHING AREAS 57,71
(E Ind. Ocean)
(W Cent. Pacific)*Pelates quadrilineatus* (Bloch, 1790)

SYNONYMS STILL IN USE: None



VERNACULAR NAMES:

FAO: En - Fourlined therapon
Fr -
Sp -

NATIONAL:

DISTINCTIVE CHARACTERS:

A small species, body oblong and compressed. Mouth small, slightly oblique; upper jaw ending well in advance of eye; jaw teeth compressed, with tips brown, conical, 3 series in upper jaw and 2 in lower jaw; vomer and palatines (roof of mouth) toothless. Opercular spine strong, edge of preoperculum serrated. Dorsal fin with 12 spines and 10 soft rays; 5th to 9th spines longest; spinous and soft parts of fin separated by a very shallow notch; anal fin with 3 spines and 10 soft rays, the 2nd spine shorter than the 3rd; caudal fin with a shallow fork. Scales small, ctenoid (rough), 10 to 13 rows above lateral line.

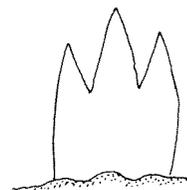
Colour: back light greyish green, sides silvery white; body with 4 to 6 dark brown longitudinal bands, the 3rd band widest, extending to base of median caudal fin ray; a blackish brown blotch behind upper end of gill opening; a large black blotch on spinous part of dorsal fin. Mouth and gill cavity bright red.

DISTINGUISHING CHARACTERS OF SIMILAR SPECIES OCCURRING IN THE AREA:

Helotes species: outer jaw teeth with 3 cusps or lobes and head short, 4 times in standard length; also, scales smaller, about 14 rows above lateral line (10 to 13 in *P. quadrilineatus*).

Therapon species: outer jaw teeth hardly enlarged, not brown-tipped; also, mouth and gill cavity pale brown (red in *Pelates quadrilineatus*).

Pelates oxyrhynchus: head pointed and no dark brown blotch at upper angle of gill opening.



3-cusped tooth

SIZE:

Maximum: 30 cm; common: 15 to 20 cm.

GEOGRAPHICAL DISTRIBUTION AND BEHAVIOUR:

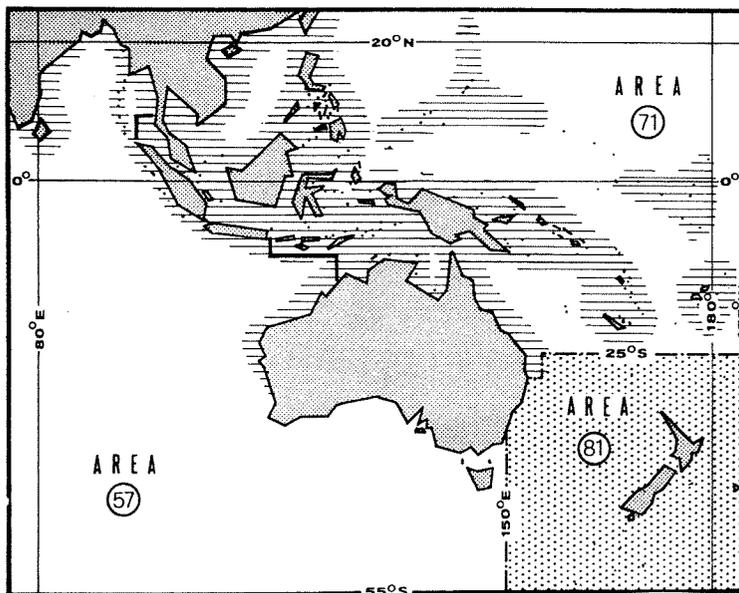
Throughout northern part of area and southward to New South Wales (Australia); also, northward to Hong Kong.

Found in inshore waters.

Feeds on invertebrates and fishes.

PRESENT FISHING GROUNDS:

Throughout its range.



CATCHES, MAIN FISHING GEAR AND PRINCIPAL FORMS OF UTILIZATION:

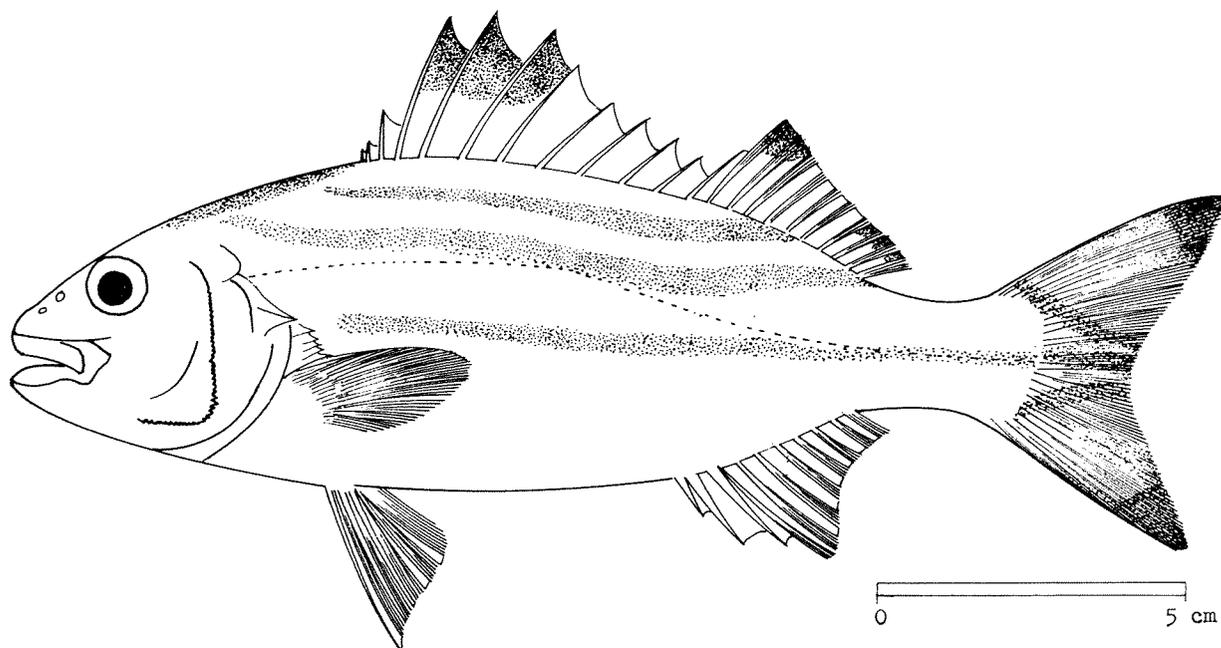
Separate statistics are not reported for this species.

Caught with handlines, traps and other inshore fishing gear.

Marketed mostly fresh.

FAO SPECIES IDENTIFICATION SHEETS

FAMILY: THERAPONIDAE

FISHING AREAS 57,71
(E Ind. Ocean)
(W Cent. Pacific)*Therapon Jarbua* (Forsskål, 1775)SYNONYMS STILL IN USE: *Holocentrus servus* Bloch, 1790

VERNACULAR NAMES:

FAO: En - Jarbua therapon
Fr -
Sp -

NATIONAL:

DISTINCTIVE CHARACTERS:

A small species, body oblong and compressed. Mouth slightly oblique, upper jaw extending to below middle of eye; jaw teeth in villiform bands; vomer and palatines toothed. Operculum with strong and pungent spines; edge of pre-operculum strongly serrated. Dorsal fin with 11 to 12 strong spines and 10 soft rays, the 4th to 6th spines longest; spinous and soft parts separated by a deep notch; margin of soft part of dorsal fin straight or slightly emarginate; anal fin with 3 spines and 8 rays, the 2nd spine slightly shorter than the 3rd; margin of soft part emarginate; caudal fin slightly forked. Scales small, ctenoid (rough), about 14 to 16 rows above lateral line.

Colour: silvery greyish blue above, silvery white below; 3 to 4 dark brown curved stripes on body; spinous dorsal fin with a black blotch; soft dorsal fin with 2 small black blotches; caudal fin with dark tips and three horizontal or oblique lines.

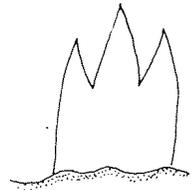
DISTINGUISHING CHARACTERS OF SIMILAR SPECIES OCCURRING IN THE AREA:

Therapon theraps, *T. puta*: dark longitudinal bands on body straight and no teeth on roof of mouth; also, 7 to 8 scale rows above lateral line in *T. theraps*, 10 to 13 in *T. puta* (14 to 16 in *T. jarbua*).

Other *Therapon* species: spinous and soft portions of dorsal fin not separated by a deep notch, no prominent black blotch on spinous dorsal fin.

Pelates species: teeth brown-tipped and in 2 or 3 series; also, mouth and gill cavity red in *P. quadrilineatus*.

Helotes species: outer teeth in both jaws with 3 cusps or lobes; also, head short, more than 4 times in standard length.



3-cusped tooth

SIZE:

Maximum: 30 cm; common: 15 to 20 cm.

GEOGRAPHICAL DISTRIBUTION AND BEHAVIOUR:

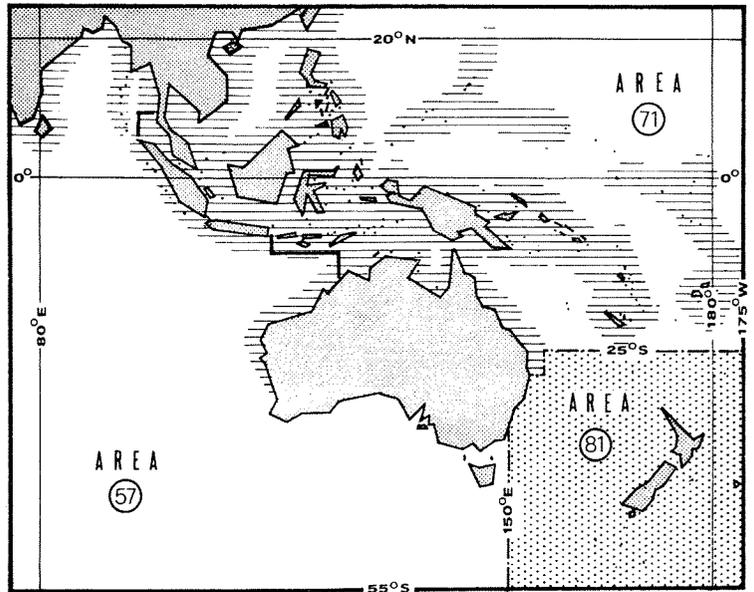
Throughout northern part of area and southward to Queensland (Australia); also, westward to East Africa and northward to Hong Kong.

Found in inshore waters, often brackish; the young enter freshwaters.

Feeds on invertebrates and fishes.

PRESENT FISHING GROUNDS:

Throughout its range.



CATCHES, MAIN FISHING GEAR AND PRINCIPAL FORMS OF UTILIZATION:

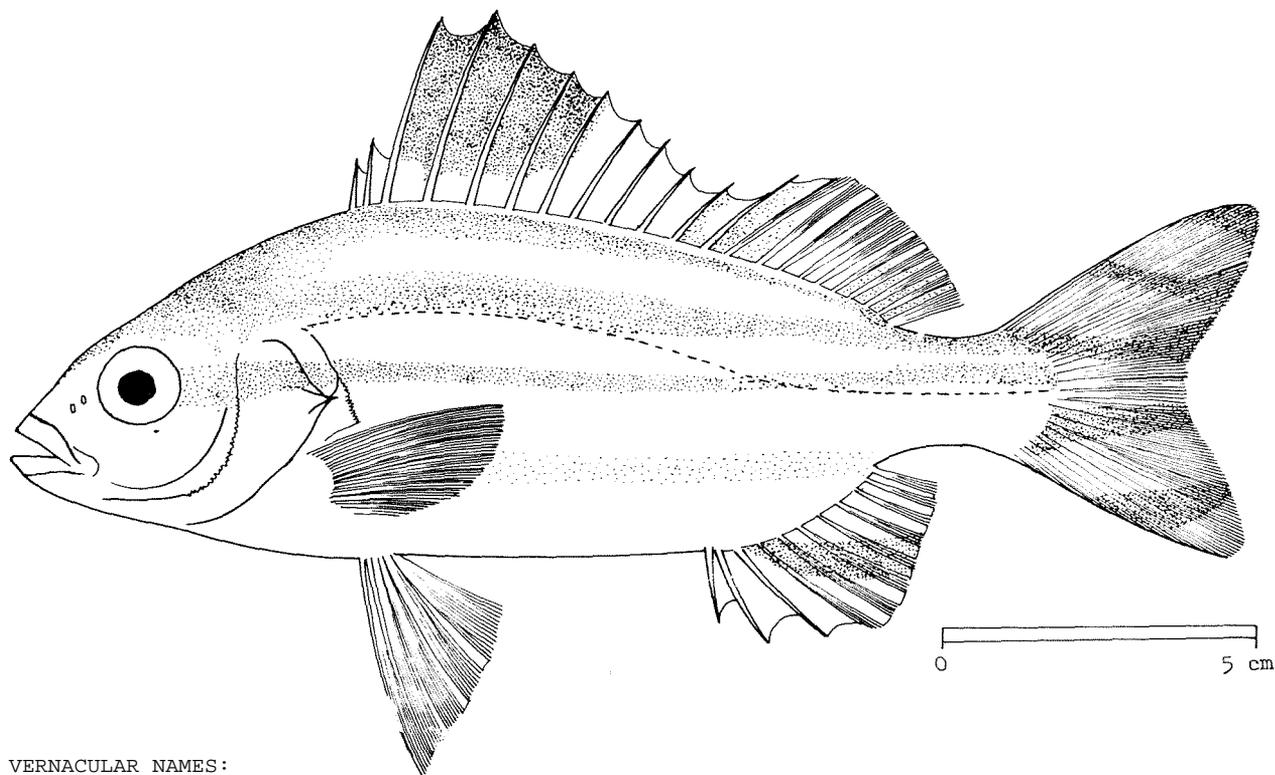
Separate statistics are not reported for this species.

Caught mainly with gillnets, traps and handlines.

Marketed mostly fresh.

FAO SPECIES IDENTIFICATION SHEETS

FAMILY: THERAPONIDAE

FISHING AREAS 57,71
(E Ind. Ocean)
(W Cent. Pacific)*Therapon theraps* Cuvier, 1829SYNONYMS STILL IN USE: *Eutherapon theraps*: Munro, 1955

VERNACULAR NAMES:

FAO: En - Largescaled therapon
Fr -
Sp -

NATIONAL:

DISTINCTIVE CHARACTERS:

A small-sized species, body oblong and compressed. Mouth slightly oblique, upper jaw extending to below anterior third of eye; jaw teeth in villiform bands; vomer and palatines (roof of mouth, toothless). Opercular spine strong and pungent, edge of pre-operculum serrated. Dorsal fin with 12 strong spines and 10 rays; 3rd to 4th spines longest; spinous and soft parts of fin separated by a deep notch, outer margin of soft part slightly convex; anal fin with 3 spines and 8 rays, 2nd spine slightly shorter than 3rd, most of outer margin of soft portion truncate; caudal fin forked with round-tipped lobes. Scales large, ctenoid (rough), about 7 to 8 rows above lateral line.

Colour: back greenish brown, sides and belly silvery white; 4 dark longitudinal bands on flanks; large blackish brown blotch on spinous part of dorsal fin; a horizontal band on anal fin; 5 dark bands on caudal fin, the 3rd and 4th bordering median caudal fin ray.

DISTINGUISHING CHARACTERS OF SIMILAR SPECIES OCCURRING IN THE AREA

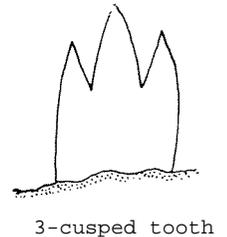
Therapon jarbua: dark bands on body curved, roof of mouth toothed and scales smaller, 14 to 16 rows above lateral line (only 7 to 8 in *T. theraps*).

Therapon puta: scales smaller, 10 to 13 rows above lateral line.

Other *Therapon* species: spinous and soft portions of dorsal fin not separated by a deep notch, no prominent black blotch on spinous dorsal fin.

Pelates species: teeth brown-tipped and in 2 or 3 series; also, mouth and gill cavity red in *P. quadrilineatus*.

Helotes species: outer teeth in both jaws with 3 cusps or lobes; also, head short, more than 4 times in standard length, and no longitudinal bands on caudal fin.



SIZE:

Maximum: 30 cm; common: 15 to 20 cm.

GEOGRAPHICAL DISTRIBUTION AND BEHAVIOUR:

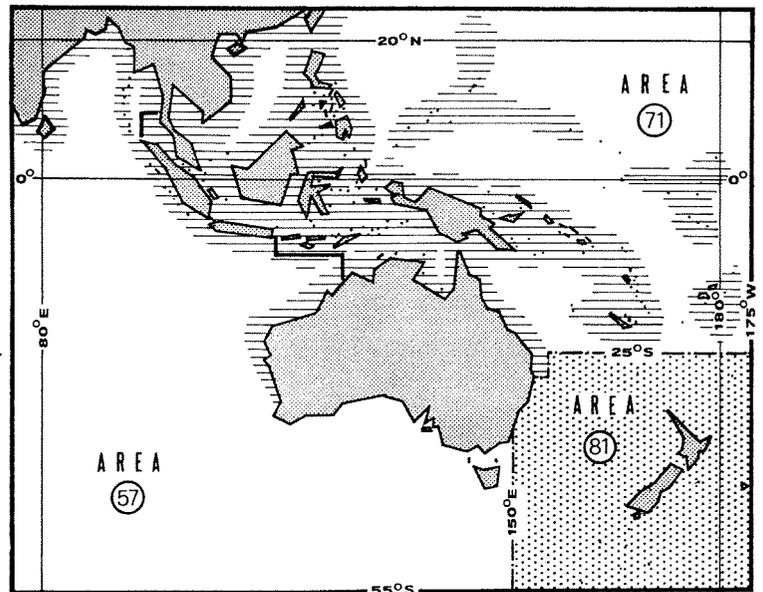
Throughout northern part of area and southward to Queensland (Australia); also, westward to East Africa and northward to Hong Kong.

Found in inshore waters, often brackish.

Feeds on invertebrates and fishes.

PRESENT FISHING GROUNDS:

Throughout its range.



CATCHES, MAIN FISHING GEAR AND PRINCIPAL FORMS OF UTILIZATION:

Separate statistics are not reported for this species.

Caught mainly with gillnets, traps and handlines.

Marketed mostly fresh.

FAO SPECIES IDENTIFICATION SHEETS

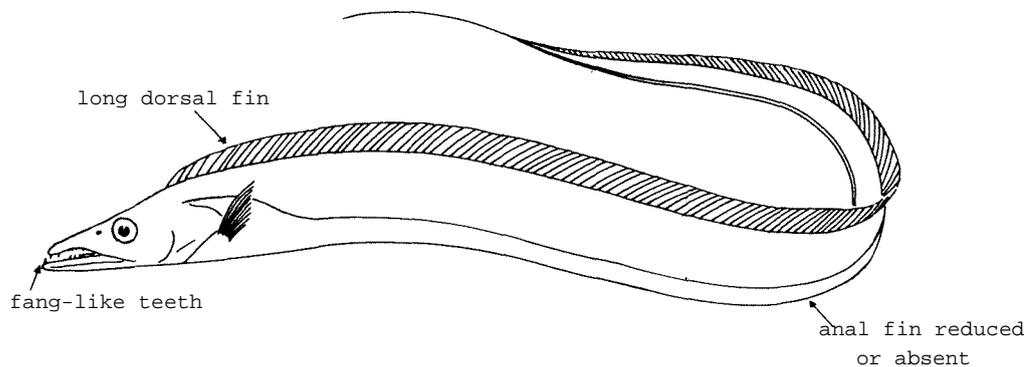
FISHING AREAS 57 ,71
(E Ind. Ocean)
(W Cent. Pacific)

TRICHIURIDAE

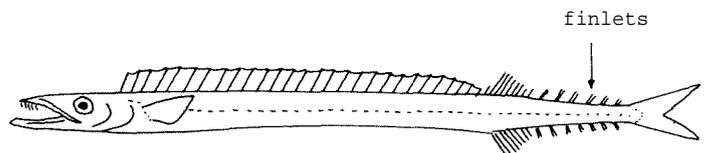
Hairtails, Cutlassfishes

Body very elongate and compressed, ribbon-like. Strong teeth in jaws, those at the front of upper jaw fang-like. Dorsal fin long, beginning shortly behind head, the anterior portion with spines and sometimes separated from the soft portion by a distinct notch, the spinous portion longer than the soft portion; pelvic fins reduced to a scale-like spine and one rudimentary ray, or absent altogether (*Trichiurus*, *Lepturacanthus*); anal fin with short spinules which may not be visible externally (*Trichiurus*); caudal fin small and forked or body tapering to a point (*Trichiurus*). Scales absent.

Colour: general colour silvery, a little darker along back.



SIMILAR FAMILIES OCCURRING IN THE AREA:



Gempylus

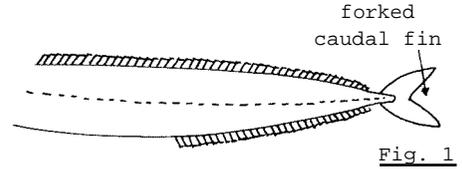
Gempylidae: soft dorsal and anal fins well defined, the rays decreasing in height posteriorly and followed by 2 to 6 dorsal finlets (except in *Epinnula*).

Trachipteridae: jaws short, without large fangs, and caudal fin up-turned.

Eel-like fishes (*Muraenesocidae*, etc.): body more cylindrical, caudal fin rounded (not forked or tapering), no spines in dorsal and anal fins.

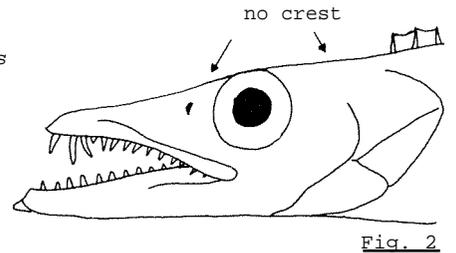
Key to Genera

1 a. Caudal fin present, forked (Fig. 1)



2 a. Head profile rising smoothly to dorsal fin origin, no bony crest present (Fig. 2)

3 a. Spinous part of dorsal fin twice as long as soft part *Diplospinus*



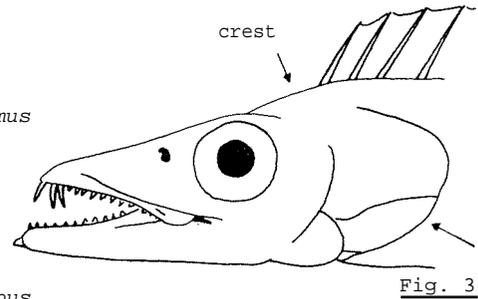
3 b. Spinous part of dorsal fin about equal to soft part or much shorter

4 a. Dorsal spines and rays 91 to 95, the spinous and soft parts about equal in length *Aphanopus*

4 b. Dorsal spines and rays more than 120, the soft part of dorsal fin twice the length of spinous part *Benthodesmus*

2 b. Head profile with prominent crest (Fig. 3)

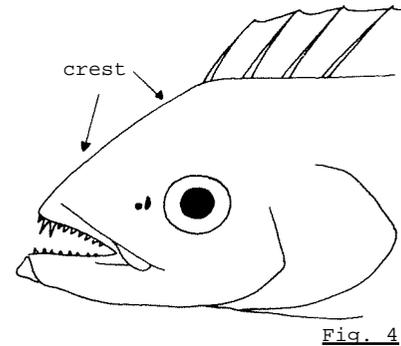
5 a. Head crest on nape only (Fig. 3); area between eyes concave *Lepidopus*



5 b. Head crest from snout to dorsal fin origin (Fig. 4); area between eyes convex

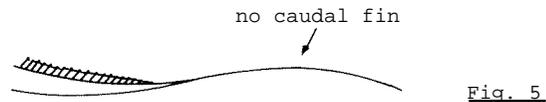
6 a. Body depth 12 to 13 times in its length .. *Evoxymetopon*

6 b. Body depth 20 to 28 times in its length *Assurger*



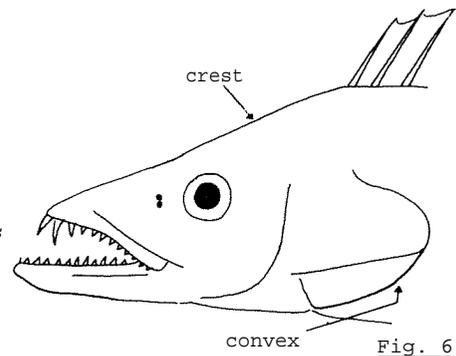
1 b. Caudal fin absent, body tapering to a point (Fig. 5)

7 a. Pelvic fins present (wing-like scales); lower hind border of gill cover convex (Fig. 6)



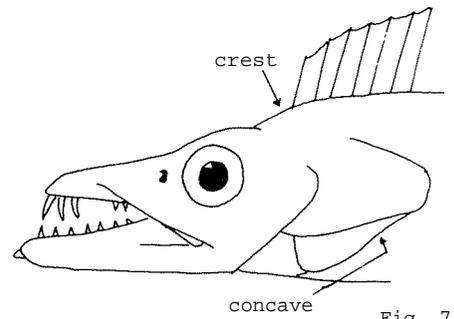
8 a. Body depth 14 to 18 times in its length .. *Eupleurograrus*

8 b. Body depth 20 to 24 times in its length *Tentoriceps*



7 b. Pelvic fins absent;
 lower hind margin of
 gill cover concave
 (Fig. 7)

9 a. Soft anal fin
 rays buried in
 skin; eye
 diameter 5 to
 7 times in
 head length *Trichiurus*



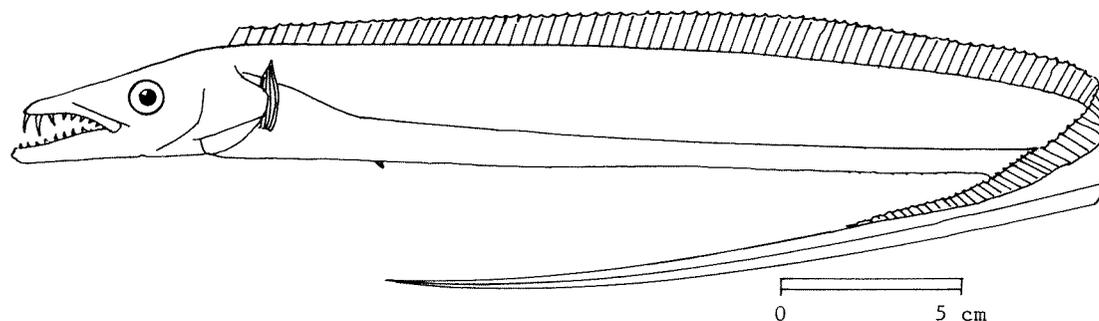
9 b. Soft anal fin
 rays pungent
 spinules; eye
 diameter 6 to
 10 times in
 head length ... *Lepturacanthus*

List of Species occurring in the Area
 (Code numbers are given for those species
 for which Identification Sheets are included)

<i>Assurger anzac</i>		<i>Evoxymetopon taeniatus</i>	
<i>Benthodesmus elongatus</i>		<i>Lepidopus caudatus</i>	
<i>Benthodesmus tenuis</i>		<i>Lepturacanthus savala</i>	TRICH Lept 1
<i>Eupleurogrammus intermedius</i>		<i>Trichiurus lepturus</i>	TRICH Trich 1
<i>Eupleurogrammus muticus</i>	TRICH Eupl 1		

FAO SPECIES IDENTIFICATION SHEETS

FAMILY: TRICHIURIDAE

FISHING AREAS 57,71
(E Ind. Ocean)
(W Cent. Pacific)*Eupleurogrammus muticus* (Gray, 1831)SYNONYMS STILL IN USE: *Trichiurus muticus* Gray, 1831

VERNACULAR NAMES:

FAO: En - Malayan hairtail
Fr -
Sp -

NATIONAL:

DISTINCTIVE CHARACTERS:

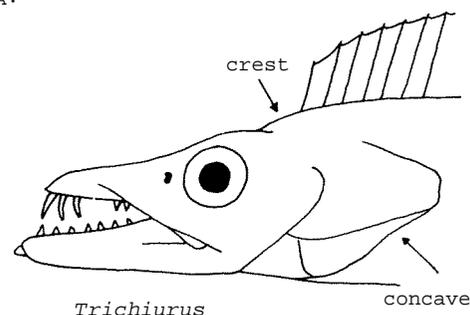
Body very elongate and strongly compressed, ribbon-like, tapering to a point (tip sometimes broken). Mouth large, with fang-like teeth. Eye diameter 6 to 8 times in head length; lower hind margin of gill cover convex. A single dorsal fin, with 3 spines and 143 to 147 soft rays, running from behind head almost to end of body; pectoral fins about as long as snout; pelvic fins present but reduced to wing-like scales; anal fin reduced to separate spines, which are buried in flesh in larger specimens, anal fin origin lying beneath 41st to 43rd soft dorsal rays; caudal fin absent.

Colour: (fresh) steely blue with metallic reflections; (dead) silvery grey.

DISTINGUISHING CHARACTERS OF SIMILAR SPECIES OCCURRING IN THE AREA:

Eupleurogrammus intermedius: anal fin origin below 33rd to 37th soft dorsal fin rays (below 41st to 43rd in *E. muticus*); also, dorsal fin with 123 to 131 soft rays (143 to 147 in *E. muticus*).

Trichiurus lepturus: lower hind margin of gill cover concave and pelvic fins absent; also, eye larger (5 to 7 times in head length; 6 to 8 times in *E. muticus*).

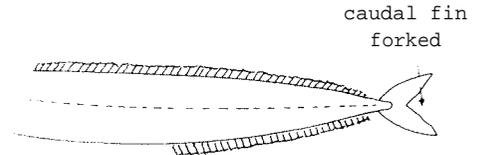


Trichiurus

concave

Lepturacanthus savala: pelvic fins absent, but soft anal fin rays visible, not buried in skin; also, lower hind margin of gill cover concave.

Other trichiurid fishes: small forked caudal fin present.



caudal fin
forked

Evoxymetopon
Assurger

SIZE:

Maximum: 100 cm;
common: 60 to 90 cm.

GEOGRAPHICAL DISTRIBUTION AND BEHAVIOUR:

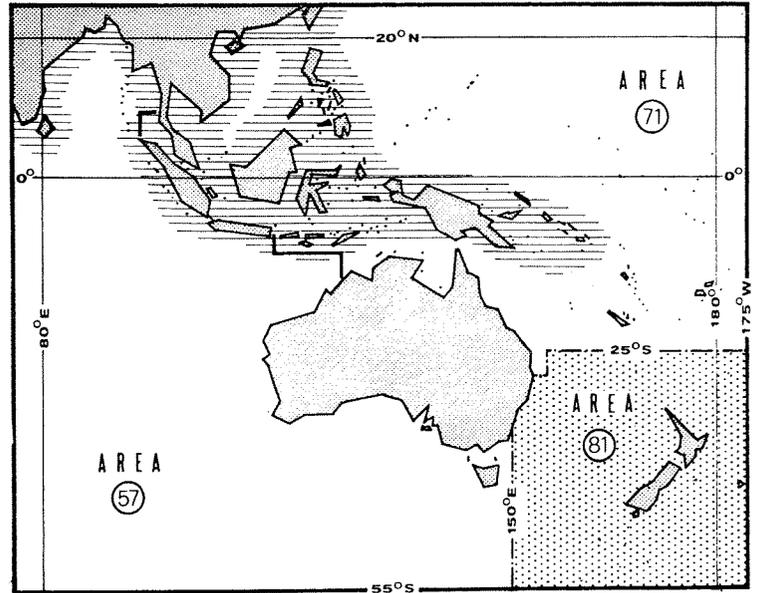
Most of northern part of area, but not southward to Australia.

Bottom-living as well as pelagic. Occurs to depths of at least 100 m.

Feeds on crustaceans and fishes.

PRESENT FISHING GROUNDS:

Coastal waters, to depths of 100 m.



CATCHES, MAIN FISHING GEAR AND PRINCIPAL FORMS OF UTILIZATION:

Separate statistics for this species are reported from the Philippines only (1972: 400 tons).

Caught mainly with bottom trawls, handlines, gill nets and traps.

Marketed mainly fresh; also dried-salted or prepared as fish balls.

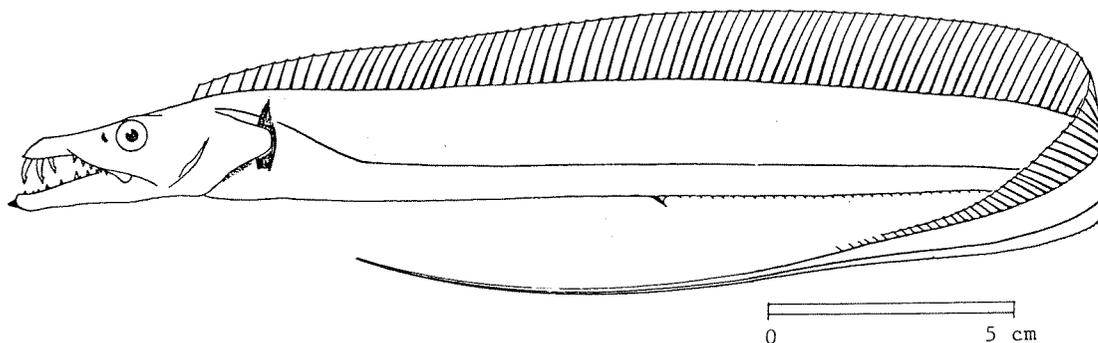
FAO SPECIES IDENTIFICATION SHEETS

FAMILY: TRICHIURIDAE

FISHING AREAS 57,71

(E Ind. Ocean)

(W Cent. Pacific)

Lepturacanthus savala (Cuvier, 1829)SYNONYMS STILL IN USE: *Trichiurus savala* Cuvier, 1829*Trichiurus armatus* Gray, 1831

VERNACULAR NAMES:

FAO: En - Smallhead hairtail

Fr -

Sp -

NATIONAL:

DISTINCTIVE CHARACTERS:

Body very elongate and strongly compressed, ribbon-like, tapering to a point (tip sometimes broken). Mouth large, with fang-like teeth. Eye diameter 6 to 10 times in head length. Lower hind margin of gill cover concave. A single dorsal fin, running from behind head almost to end of body; pectoral fins a little shorter than snout length; pelvic fins absent; anal fin reduced to a series of separate spines, but not buried in skin; caudal fin absent. Lateral line nearer to ventral profile than to dorsal profile.

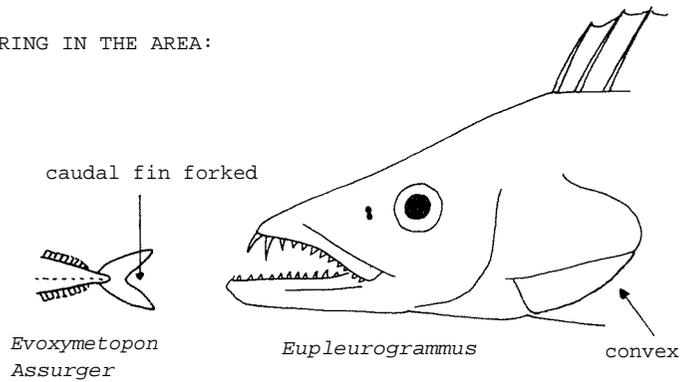
Colour: (fresh) steely blue with metallic reflections; (dead) silvery grey.

DISTINGUISHING CHARACTERS OF SIMILAR SPECIES OCCURRING IN THE AREA:

Trichiurus lepturus: soft anal fin rays not visible, buried in skin; also, eye larger (5 to 7 times in head length; 6 to 10 times in *L. savala*).

Eupleurogrammus species: pelvic fins present (as reduced wing-like scales); also, lower hind margin of gill cover convex.

Other trichiurid species: small forked caudal fin present.



SIZE:

Maximum: 100 cm;
common: 70 to 80 cm.

GEOGRAPHICAL DISTRIBUTION AND BEHAVIOUR:

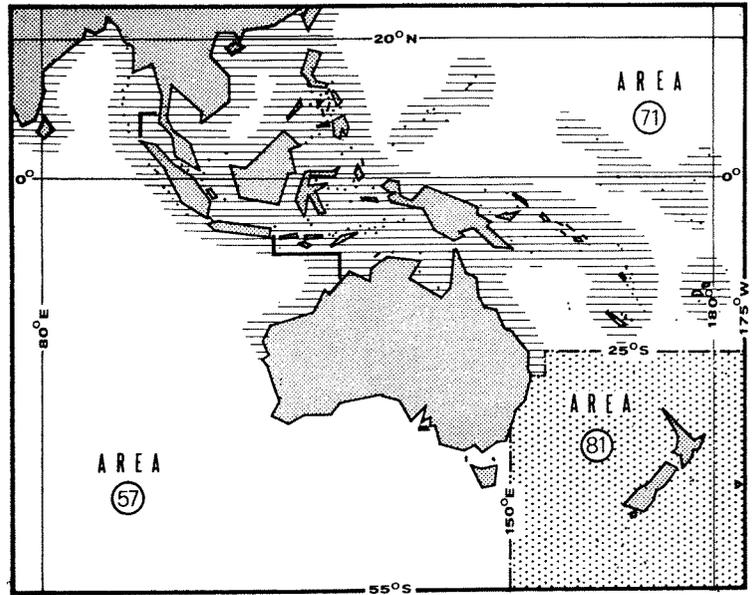
Northern part of area and southward to Queensland and north-western Australia.

Bottom-living as well as pelagic.

Feeds on crustaceans, cephalopods and fishes.

PRESENT FISHING GROUNDS:

Coastal waters and trawling grounds, down to 100 m.



CATCHES, MAIN FISHING GEAR AND PRINCIPAL FORMS OF UTILIZATION:

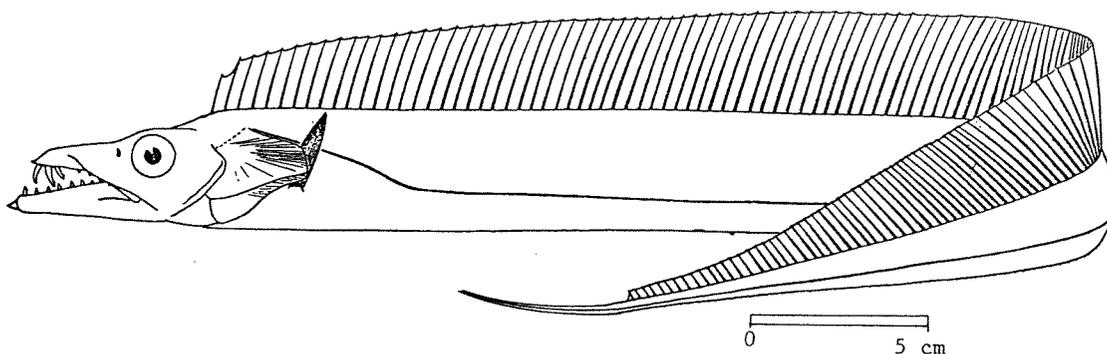
Separate statistics are not reported for this species.

Caught mainly with bottom trawls, handlines, gill nets and traps.

Marketed mostly fresh, also dried-salted or prepared as fish balls.

FAO SPECIES IDENTIFICATION SHEETS

FAMILY: TRICHIURIDAE

FISHING AREAS 57,71
(E Ind. Ocean)
(W Cent. Pacific)*Trichiurus lepturus* Linnaeus, 1758SYNONYMS STILL IN USE: *Trichiurus haumela* (Forsskål, 1775)
Trichiurus japonicus Temminck & Schlegel, 1844
Trichiurus lajor Bleeker, 1854

VERNACULAR NAMES:

FAO: En - Largehead hairtail
Fr -
Sp -

NATIONAL:

DISTINCTIVE CHARACTERS:

Body very elongate and strongly compressed, ribbon-like, tapering to a point (tip sometimes broken). Mouth large, with fang-like teeth. Eye diameter 5 to 7 times in head length; tower hind margin of gill cover concave. A single dorsal fin running from behind head almost to end of body; pectoral fins about as long as snout; pelvic fins absent; anal fin reduced to separate spines, which are buried in flesh in larger fish; caudal fin absent. Lateral line nearer to ventral profile than to dorsal profile.

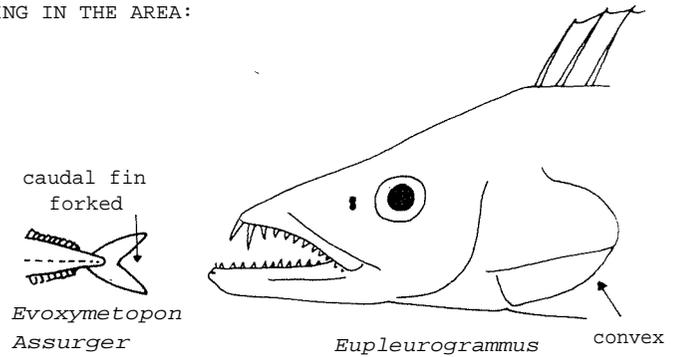
Colour: (fresh) steely blue with metallic reflections; (dead) silvery grey.

DISTINGUISHING CHARACTERS OF SIMILAR SPECIES OCCURRING IN THE AREA:

Lepturacanthus savala: soft anal fin rays visible, not buried in skin; also, eye smaller (6 to 10 times in head length; 5 to 7 times in *T. lepturus*).

Eupleurogrammus species: pelvic fins present (as reduced wing-like scales); also, lower hind margin of gill cover convex.

Other trichiurid fishes: small forked caudal fin present.



SIZE:

Maximum: 110 cm;
common: 70 to 90 cm.

GEOGRAPHICAL DISTRIBUTION AND BEHAVIOUR:

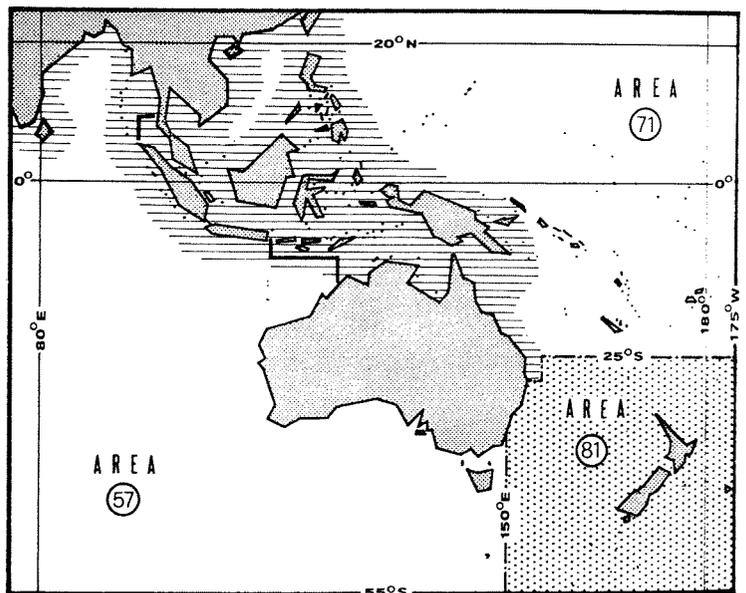
Most of northern part of area and southward to Queensland (perhaps also western Australia); also, westward to Africa and northward to Japan.

Both bottom-living and pelagic. Occurs to depths of at least 100 m, but usually shallower. Enters estuaries and may be found in extremely shallow water.

Feeds on crustaceans, cephalopods and fishes.

PRESENT FISHING GROUNDS:

Coastal waters and trawling grounds, down to 100 m.



CATCHES, MAIN FISHING GEAR AND PRINCIPAL FORMS OF UTILIZATION:

The total reported catch in 1972 was:

area 57 (Eastern Indian Ocean): 15 500 tons (Bangla Desh: 2 500 tons; India: 13 000 tons)
area 71 (Western Central Pacific): 12 300 tons (Malaysia: 1 200 tons; Philippines: 11 100 tons)

Caught mainly with bottom trawls, handlines, gill nets and traps.

Marketed mainly fresh; also dried-salted or prepared as fish balls.