

A RECORD OF AN UNUSUALLY LARGE SPECIMEN OF *LACTARIUS LACTARIUS* (SCHNEIDER)

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ABSTRACT

A specimen of *Lactarius lactarius* (Schneider) measuring 350 mm in total length, the largest to be recorded so far, was caught off Veraval, northwest coast of India. The previous known record was that of a specimen measuring 330 mm in total length from Gulf of Mannar, southeast coast of India (Shanmughavelu 1973).

Lactarius lactarius (Schneider), popularly called bigjawed jumper, white-fish, or butterfish and locally known as *Parava* (Malayalam), *Sudumbu* (Tamil), *Saundala* (Kannada, and Konkani), *Pervi* (Marathi), *Chapla* (Gujarati) and *Kuthuppu* (Telugu), is a common ground fish caught in trawl nets in fairly good quantities from all over our inshore waters and is well-known for its quality (Appa Rao 1966, Kaikini 1974). The fish is generally described as attaining a size of 250-280 mm in total length (Day 1958, Munroe 1955), Misra 1959). But biologists have observed that the fish grows much beyond this length. Shanmughavelu (1973) recorded a fish measuring 330 mm in total length from Gulf of Mannar, which, however, was an abnormal specimen in that it had only 23 anal fin rays as against 27-28 in the normal ones.

A specimen of *L. lactarius* measuring 350 mm in total length and 520 g in weight was caught in bottom-drift gill net off Veraval, northwest coast of India, on 4-11-1976. But for its unusually large size, the fish was normal in all characters of *L. lactarius*. The specimen, preserved in formalin, is kept at the Veraval Research Centre of C.I.F.T.

The various measurements of the specimen are: Total length 350 mm; Standard length 290 mm; Snout to 1st dorsal 118 mm; length of head 71 mm; Snout to gill opening (opercle) 90 mm; Height of mouth (extended) 54 mm; Width of mouth (extended) 44 mm; Gill girth 210 mm; Maximum girth 232 mm; Diameter of eye 19 mm; Number of fin rays in anal 26; Weight 520 g.

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