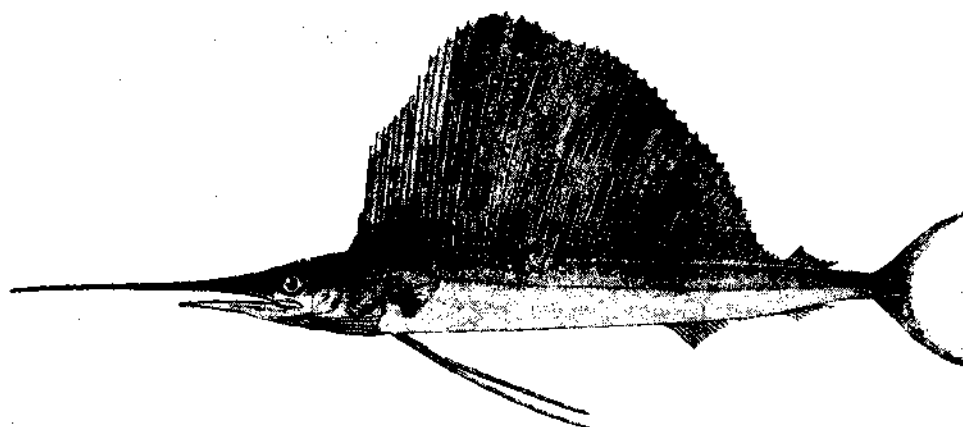


ON A JUVENILE SAILFISH, *ISTIOPHORUS GLADIUS* (BROUSSONET)
FROM THE LACCADIVE SEA

During the second voyage of the Research Vessel *Kalava* in the Laccadive Sea a juvenile sailfish was collected at about 4 a.m. on 10-4-1959 from Station No. 436 (Lat. 10°32' N., Long. 74°35' E.) and was kindly passed on to me for study by my colleague Dr. R. Raghu Prasad. The fish had come near the vessel attracted to light and was caught with the help of a dip net.

Though adult sailfish are common in the open seas around India and even frequent the coastal waters during certain seasons, juveniles are hardly known. Larval stages ranging in length from 3.40 mm. to 11.75 mm. were collected from the Laccadive Sea (Jones 1959), but all attempts to obtain juveniles met with little success. The only previous record from Indian waters is of an early juvenile 127 mm. long by Deraniyagala (1949) from off the coast of Ceylon. The specimen collected from the Laccadive Sea is therefore considered to be of special interest.



The juvenile sailfish (Fig. 1) has a total length of 432 mm. The measurements are given in the table. The number of the gill rakers is 44. The first dorsal has 48 rays and the second dorsal 7. The anal has 11 rays in the anterior portion and 7 in the posterior portion with 5 small detached rays in between which are not discernible in the adult.

Measurements in mm.

| Total | Std. L. | Head | Snout | Eye | Upper jaw | Lower jaw | Snout to vent | Pectoral | Pelvic |
|-------|---------|------|-------|-----|-----------|-----------|---------------|----------|--------|
| 432 | 396 | 170 | 120.5 | 12 | 132.5 | 58 | 281 | 24 | 97 |

The general colour is uniformly dark along the dorsal side becoming lighter laterally. The ventral side is white. The jaws are black in colour. The dorsal

fin is black and the characteristic blotches found in the fin of the adult fish are seen only in a few places. In this connection it may be mentioned that there are five conspicuous blotches in the juvenile recorded from Ceylon (Deraniyagala *op. cit.*). The juvenile specimens of *Istiophorus americanus* (Cuvier) from the east coast of America of about the size as the one from the Laccadive Sea figured by Gehringer (1956) appear to have numerous blotches on the dorsal fin.

Central Marine Fisheries Research Station,
Mandapam Camp.

S. JONES

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