

A RECORD OF THE SNAKE MACKEREL *GEMPYLUS SERPENS*
CUVIER FROM GULF OF MANNAR

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ABSTRACT

A snake mackerel *Gempylus serpens* Cuvier (837 mm in total length) has been collected from *Podivalai* (drift net) on 22nd June 1982 from Kayalpattinam (Lat 8° 34' N, Long. 78° 07' E) and reported, this being the first record of the species from Gulf of Mannar.

Gempylus serpens Cuvier is a bathypelagic species and is known from the tropical and subtropical parts of the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans, and East London, South Africa and Laccadives in the Indian Ocean. Jones (1960) reported two specimens of *Gempylus serpens* Cuvier (580 mm, 434 mm) from the Laccadives Sea.

On 22nd June 1982 a specimen of snake mackerel, *Gempylus serpens* Cuvier, was caught from Gulf of Mannar at a depth of 12-14 m, in a drift net (*podivalat*) operated off Kayalpatinam (Lat. 8° 34' N. Long. 78° 07' E). This is the first record of this species from this region.

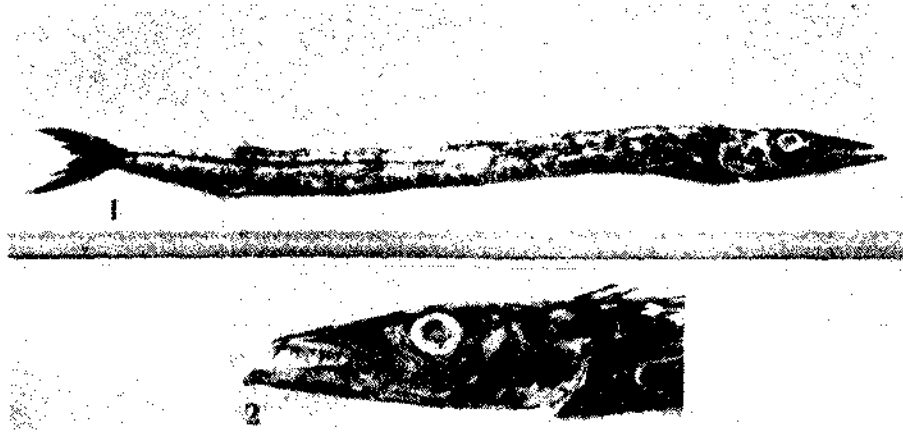


FIG. 1. Snake mackerel *Gempylus serpens* Cuvier, 837 mm, male (1) (the black skin peeled on preservation of the specimen in 5% formalin) and head view of the specimen, (2).

Description: D1 - XXVII; D2 - I, 12+16 (19); A-1, 10+6 (17); p-14; V - II, 5; GR - 1+1+5. The specimen was a male; 837 mm in total length and 520 g in weight. Body very much elongate and compressed. In fresh condition the entire body, caudal fin, pectoral fin, pelvic fin and interspinous membrane of first dorsal, all jet-black in colour. Lateral line double, commencing from upper angle of the opercular region; the first lateral line running parallel to the base of the first dorsal and ending at 25th spine of the first dorsal. Second lateral line gently curves down above base of pectoral, running midlateral and ending at base of caudal peduncle. Upper jaw shorter than the lower; teeth in a single series on sides of jaws; three pairs of large compressed canines anteriorly in front of upper jaw; upper jaw having 34 teeth (17+17) and lower jaw with 36 teeth (18+18). Detailed descriptions of this species are given by Smith (1949), de Beaufort (1951), Jones (1960), and Jones and Kumaran (1980).

Circumtropical distribution. Recorded from East London, Pondoland in Southern Africa and Laccadives Sea in the Indian Ocean. The present specimen is the first record of this species from the Gulf of Mannar and seems to be the recorded.

The authors are grateful to Shri K. Nagappan Nayar, Officer-in-Charge, Tuticorin Research Centre of Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute, Tuticorin, for his keen interest and encouragement.

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