

Rare occurrence of the oilfish *Ruvettus pretiosus* along Chennai coast

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The oil fish, *Ruvettus pretiosus* (Cocco, 1833) has a distribution in Mediterranean Sea; Antalya Bay and also seem to have a wide distribution in tropical and temperate seas of the world. The occurrence of this species is not so far reported from Chennai coast

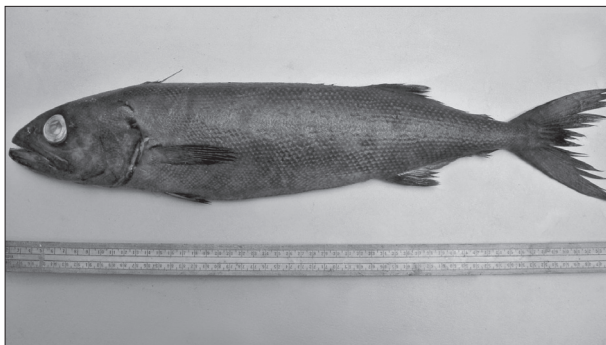


Fig. 1. *Ruvettus pretiosus*



Fig. 2. Close up view of spine like scales of *R. pretiosus*

but, *Lepidocybium flavobrunneum* and *Ruvettus pretiosus* belonging to the family Gempylidae have been reported from large meshed gillnets along Tuticorin coast in the Gulf of Mannar during 2004-2006 by Balasubramanian (2007). A specimen of *R. pretiosus* (Fig. 1 and 2) belonging to the family Gempylidae (snake mackerels), measuring 553 mm with a weight of 1030 g was recorded from trawl landings at Chennai Fisheries Harbour in the first week of March 2009. The trawler operated between 150 and 200 m depth, at a distance of 250 - 300 km along the north-east towards the Nagapattinam coast. The oil fish, *R. pretiosus* has a very rough skin, the scales are interspersed with spinous bony tubercles and its body is uniformly dark blue in colour. Its stomach was empty and the gonad was mature. The morphometric measurements of the specimen are given in Table 1.

Table 1. Morphometric measurements (mm) of *Ruvettus pretiosus*

Total length	:	553
Standard length	:	440
Snout to origin of 1st dorsal	:	122
Length of 1st dorsal fin	:	185
Head length	:	133
Snout to pectoral	:	140
Pectoral length	:	73
Body depth	:	102
Eye diameter	:	25
Sex	:	Female
Total weight	:	1.030 kg.