



Greater Sand Eel *Hyperoplus lanceolatus* (Les Sauvage)

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BERYX BERYX SPLENDENS (LOWE 1834)

On 22 June 1992 a single specimen of *Beryx splendens* was captured by the MFV 'Jacob' (Skipper: Mr Donie Flaherty, Dingle) while trawling at a depth of 260m W Tearaght Island (V1895), Co Kerry.

The following morphometric and meristic data was recorded: T.L. 39.5cm; F.L. 34.0cm; S.L. 30.0cm; Wt. 875g; depth of caudal peduncle, 3.3cm; greatest body depth, 11.7cm; number of gill rakers, 25; dorsal fin ray count, 4 + 15; anal fin, 4 + 28.

It is interesting to note that the current specimen was captured together with a specimen of *B. decadactylus* (Cuvier, 1829). The presence of both species together has been noted on a number of previous occasions (Bougis, P. 1945 *Bull. Inst. Oceanog. Monaco* **891**: 1-9 Wheeler, A. & Blacker, R. W. 1969 *J. Fish Biol.* **1**: 311-331; Blacker, R. W. 1971 *Ann. Biol.* **28**: 221-222).

B. splendens has been recorded on only four previous occasions in Irish waters: Blacker (R. W. 1962 *Ann. Mag. nat. Hist.* (13) **5**: 261-271); Wheeler & Blacker 1969 *op. cit.*, 2 specimens); and Molloy & Minchin (1980 *Ir. Nat. J.* **20**: 108). The latter authors recorded the first specimen from within the 183m line.

B. splendens is generally regarded as rare in northern European waters, but it is more frequently encountered in warmer seas to the south where it is common around the islands of Madeira, Canary and Azores. It is also known from the coasts of Portugal, Spain, Morocco and as far south as South Africa. In the western Atlantic, it is found from the Gulf of Maine southwards to the Gulf of Mexico, while in the Pacific, it is known from Japan and Australia (Whitehead *et al.* 1986 *Fishes of the North-eastern Atlantic and the Mediterranean* **2** UNESCO, Paris).

The current specimen has been donated to the National Museum of Ireland, Dublin (NMI: 54.1992).

MEGRIM LEPIDORHOMBUS WHIFFIAGONIS (WALBAUM)

During August 1990 two 'reversed' specimens of megrim *Lepidorhombus whiffiagonis* were captured by the MFV 'Roving Swan' (Skipper: Mr Patrick Sheehy, Dingle) in Dingle Bay, Co Kerry.

The following measurements were recorded: T.L. 30.5cm and 34.0cm; S.L. 28.0cm and 28.5cm; Wt (gutted) 212.5g and 237.5g respectively.

The early larvae of flatfish (Heterosomata) are very similar to those of symmetrical fishes. However, when they assume the specialized features characteristic of the group, the eyes of the majority of individual species of flatfish move onto either the right side (dextral) or left side (sinistral) of the fish (Bruno, D. W. and Fraser, C. O. 1988 *J. Fish Biol.* **32**: 483-484). Members of the Scopthalmidae, which, for example, includes the megrim, turbot *Scophthalmus maximus* L., and brill *S. rhombus* L., normally have their eyes on the left side of the head (*i.e.* sinistral position) except for 'reversed' examples which are comparatively rare (Wheeler 1969).

There would appear to be only one previous example of a reversed megrim from Irish waters: New Ground, Dingle Bay, July 1965 (Hillis, J. P. and Long, M. 1972 *Ir. Nat. J.* **17**: 204-205).

The current specimens have been donated to the National Museum of Ireland, Dublin (NMI 60.1990).

GREATER SAND EEL HYPEROPLUS LANCEOLATUS (LES SAUVAGE)

On 29 May 1989, a large specimen of the greater sand eel *Hyperoplus lanceolatus* was captured by trawl in Dingle Bay, Co Kerry.

The following measurements were recorded: T.L. 33.0cm; F.L. 32.5cm; and S.L. 30.0cm. The specimen would appear to be one of the largest examples of *H. lanceolatus* recorded from Irish waters.

H. lanceolatus is by far the largest of the five species of sand eel found in Irish waters (W & K 1976). In NE European waters various maximum sizes for *H. lanceolatus* have been quoted. Although Wheeler (1969 & 1978) remarked that the species can attain a maximum length of 32cm (T.L.), Molloy (1967 *Ir. Fish. Invest. Ser. B, No. 2*) quoted a maximum length of 38cm (T.L.), while more recently Whitehead *et al.* (1986) *Fishes of the North-eastern Atlantic and the Mediterranean* **2**. UNESCO Paris) quoted a maximum size of 40cm (S.L.).

While investigating sand eels in the Irish Sea during 1965, Molloy (1966 *Ir. Nat. J.* **8**: 232-233) examined specimens of *H. lanceolatus* which ranged in length from 10.5 to 32.4cm (T.L.). He estimated that fish with a mean length of 31.5cm were six years old. He also found that *H. lanceolatus*

was an important predator of Raitts sand eel *Ammodytes marinus* Raitt. The spawning season for *H. lanceolatus* appeared to be prolonged from May to the end of July.

H. lanceolatus is a common species in Irish waters and indeed throughout the NE Atlantic from eastern Murman (70°N) and Spitzbergen (75°N) to Portugal (38°N) including Iceland and much of the Baltic. However, it has not been recorded from the Mediterranean and Barents Seas (Whitehead *et al.* 1986 *op. cit.*).

The current specimen has been donated to the National Museum of Ireland, Dublin (NMI 26.1991).

RABBIT FISH *CHIMAERA MONSTROSA* L.

During July 1991, a specimen of a rabbit fish *Chimaera monstrosa*, measuring 93.0cm (T.L.) and weighing 1.135kg, was captured by Mr Michael McGinley (Teelin, Co Donegal) at a depth of 73m off the N Mayo coast.

During late May 1992, two male specimens of rabbit fish were captured by trawlers at a depth of about 160m W of Slyne Head (L510410), Co Galway; one by the MFV 'Jacob' (Skipper: Mr Michael Murphy, Dingle) and the other by the MFV 'John Colm' (Skipper: Mr Andrew O'Connor, Dingle). The specimens measured 58.5cm and 75.5cm (T.L.) respectively. The stomach of one specimen contained the remains of *Nephrops* prawns.

A further male specimen of *C. monstrosa*, measuring 84.5cm (T.L.) and weighing 975g, was captured in November 1992 by the MFV 'Tenneje' (Skipper: Mr John M. Graham, Dingle) while demersal gill netting at a depth of 160m W of Tearaght Island (V1895), Co Kerry.

The current specimens bring the total number of records of *C. monstrosa* from Irish inshore waters (within the 183m line) to ten. Previous records were summarized by Quigley & Henry (1985 *Ir. Nat. J.* 21: 476-477) and O'Riordan (1986 *Ir. Nat. J.* 22: 34-37).

The species is regarded as common in deep offshore waters (Wheeler 1969) but rare within the 183m line in Irish waters (W & K 1976). However, Wheeler (1969) remarked that the species undertakes an inshore migration in summer and this brings them into shallower water, often 100m or less. He also suggested that this inshore migration is probably connected with the breeding biology of the species and observed that most of those taken in shoal water were large females.

FLOUNDER *PLATICHTHYS FLESUS* (L.)

During early March 1991, a 'reversed' specimen of flounder *Platichthys flesus* was captured on rod and line by Mr Liam Kane (Blanchardstown, Dublin 15) from the beach at Cahore (T220475), Co Wexford.

The following details were recorded: T.L. 30.4cm; S.L. 25.5cm; Wt. 400g; anal fin ray count, 43; and dorsal fin ray count, 60. The specimen was a maturing male. A significant number of ectoparasites was found on the base of the pectoral fins (*Lepeophtheirus pectoralis*) and on the gills (*Acanthochondria cornuta* O. F. Muller).

Members of the Pleuronectidae, which, for example, includes the flounder, plaice *Pleuronectes platessa* L., dab *Limanda limanda* L., and halibut *Hippoglossus hippoglossus* L., normally have their eyes on the right side of the head (*i.e.* dextral position), except for 'reversed' examples (Bruno, D. W. & Fraser, C. O. 1988 *J. Fish Biol.* 32: 483-484). Reversal is more common in some species than in others. Although Wheeler (1969) considered reversal to be particularly common in the flounder, the current specimen would appear to be the first authenticated record of reversal in this species in Irish waters.

The current specimen has been donated to the National Museum of Ireland, Dublin (NMI: 50.1993). We wish to thank Mr Mark Holmes of the NMI for identifying the ectoparasites.

GREATER WEEVER *TRACHINUS DRACO* L.

On 29-30 July 1991 a specimen of the greater weever *Trachinus draco* measuring 38.7cm (T.L.) was captured by Mr Noel O'Brien while trawling in Ballycotton Bay (X0165), Co Cork.

The current specimen represents the 26th record of *T. draco* from Irish waters; the 9th from Co Cork; and the 3rd from Ballycotton Bay. Details on previous Irish records were summarized by Quigley, Flannery & O'Shea (1990 *Ir. Nat. J.* 23: 208-210). Please note that the date of capture of record number one in the latter list should read 1854.

We are grateful to Dr Simon Berrow, Department of Zoology, UCC, for bringing the current specimen to our attention.