

**AMERICAN FOOD AND
GAME FISHES. A POPULAR
ACCOUNT OF ALL THE SPECIES
FOUND IN AMERICA NORTH OF
THE EQUATOR, WITH KEYS FOR
READY IDENTIFICATION, LIFE HIS-
TORIES AND METHODS OF CAPTURE**

BY

DAVID STARR JORDAN, PH. D.

President of Leland Stanford Junior University

AND

BARTON WARREN EVERMANN, PH. D.

Ichthyologist of the United States Fish Commission

**ILLUSTRATED WITH COLORED PLATES AND TEXT
DRAWINGS, AND WITH PHOTOGRAPHS FROM LIFE BY
A. RADCLYFFE DUGMORE**

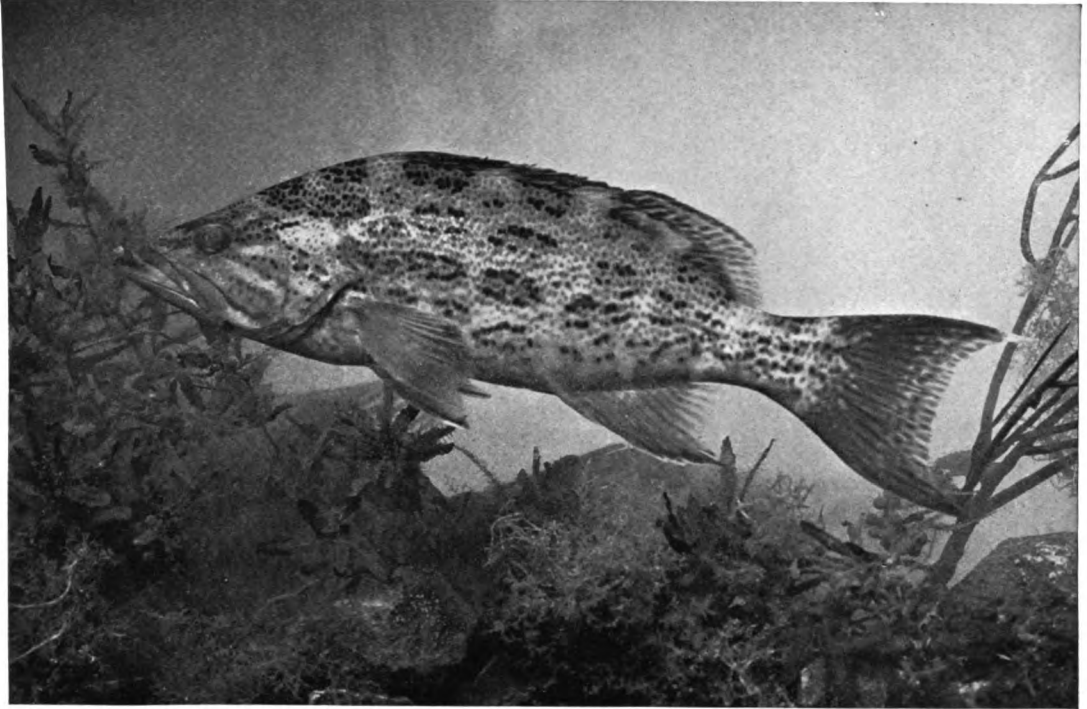


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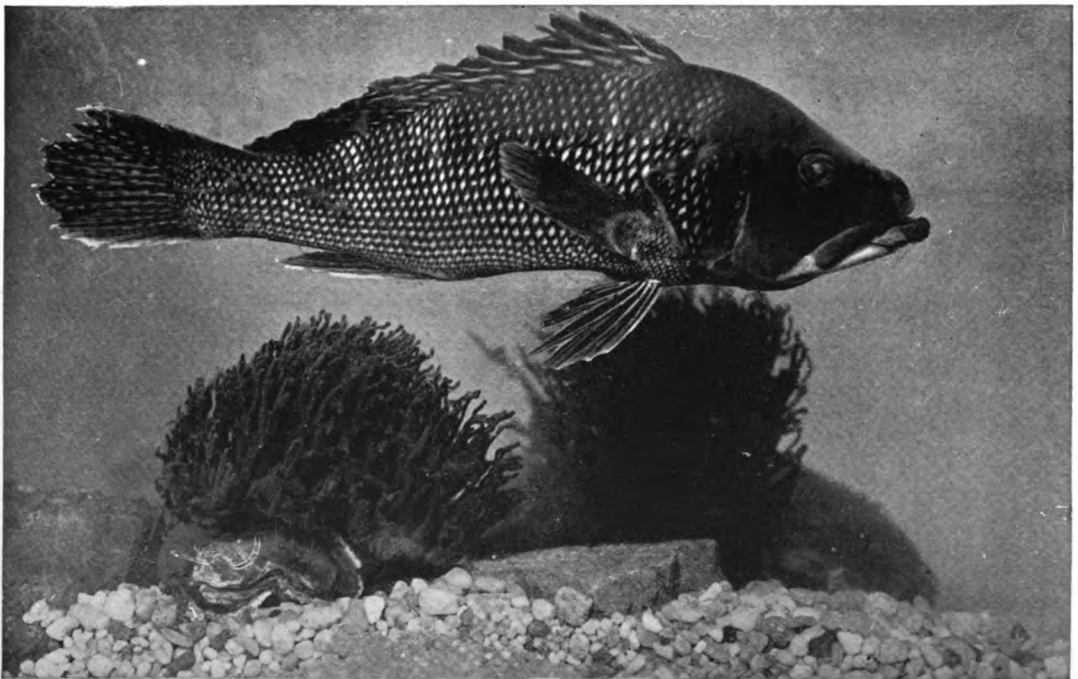
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SCAMP, *Mycteroperca phenax*



SEA BASS, *Centropristes striatus*

Centropristes

a weight of 5 pounds, and is an excellent food-fish. Colour grayish green, with obscure broad, dusky streaks and bars, which form reticulations on the sides, which are often shaded and mottled with bluish and greenish, but usually without distinct spots; a broad, dark, longitudinal shade near axis of body; belly plain silvery gray.

The genus *Centropristes* has the body robust, somewhat compressed, covered with rather large ctenoid scales; mouth large, formed as in *Serranus* and *Paralabrax*, the canines small; preopercle serrate, the lower teeth somewhat antrorse; supraoccipital and parietal with strong crests extending forward to between the postfrontal processes; smooth area on top of head very short and small; dorsal short, X, 11; anal III, 7; caudal usually 3-lobed or double concave; canines very weak.

This genus contains 3 species, one of them a very important food-fish. *C. striatus*, variously known as the black sea-bass, blackfish, hannahill, black-will, and black-harry, is found along our Atlantic coast from Cape Ann to northern Florida. It is common northward and is a well-known food-fish.

The sea-bass is usually a bottom fish, rather sluggish in its movements, and, like the tautog, is often seen lying among loose stones or in cavities in the rocks. They feed upon crabs, shrimps, small fish, and squids. They are voracious feeders, taking the hook freely, and as their mouths are tough, they are not easily lost.

Their spawning-time is probably in the summer, as the fish are full of spawn in the spring, and young fish 1 to 2 inches long are common in the eel-grass along the shores of southern New England in early fall.

The sea-bass grows to a weight of 4 or 5 pounds, though this is unusual; they average less than 2 pounds.

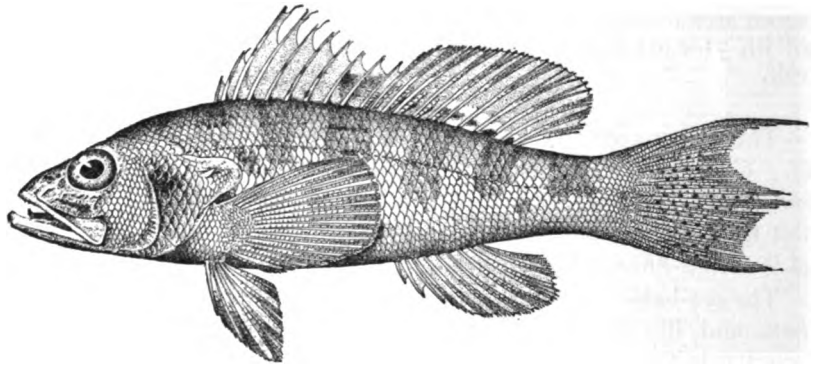
As a food-fish this species holds a high rank. The flesh is flaky and sweet, and keeps well, a feature which makes it a good shipper.

Colour, dusky-brown or black, more or less mottled and with pale longitudinal streaks; dorsal with several series of elongate whitish spots forming oblique light stripes; other fins dusky, mottled; young with a black longitudinal band, which later breaks up, forming dark cross-shades; a large black spot on last dorsal spines.

The tally-wag of the Gulf of Mexico is a distinct species of sea-bass, *C. ocyurus*, occurring in rather deep water, chiefly on the Snapper Banks.

Sea-bass

From the common sea-bass this species may be readily distinguished by the much shorter and wider-set gill-rakers, and the colour, which is a pale olive, somewhat darker on the back; side with 3 longitudinal rows of quadrate black blotches, the upper series obscure along base of caudal, the second distinct and placed just below lateral line, the 3 anterior blotches of the series somewhat confluent; the lower series very distinct jet-black and not confluent, placed alongside of belly; caudal fin with middle rays black, the outer pale, all with darker spots.



C. philadelphicus, the rock sea-bass, is found on rocky shores of South Carolina, in rather deep water. It is rather common about Charleston, but has not been seen elsewhere. It reaches 8 or 10 inches in length, and may be known by the fleshy filaments on the dorsal spines.

Another species, *C. rufus*, has been described from Martinique, but it is of doubtful validity.

The genus *Diplectrum* is close to *Prionodes*, from which it differs chiefly in the armature of the preopercle, which is provided in the adult with 1 or 2 clusters of strong, straight, divergent spines; smooth area on top of head large; profile of snout rounded; pectoral unsymmetrically rounded, its upper rays longest; ventrals inserted somewhat before axil of pectoral; dorsal spines slender, none of them much elevated; soft dorsal short, the rays X, 12; anal III, 7; caudal lunate.

Several species, all American, and all small, brightly coloured fishes, none of much food-value.