

**ON THE OCCURRENCE OF THE ORIENTAL BONITO,
SARDA ORIENTALIS (TEMMINCK AND SCHLEGEL) ALONG THE
MADRAS COAST**

A FEW specimens of the Oriental Bontio, *Sarda orientalis* were obtained on 28-7-1966 during one of my routine visits to the fish landing place at Ayodhya-kuppam in Madras city. This species continued to occur for nearly a week in small quantities in the gill net landings which also brought good catches of the Indian Mackerel, *Rastrelliger kanagurta*. It is quite likely that the Oriental Bonito constitutes a sporadic fishery along the east coast of India also during June to September which is the season for its fishery along the West coast.

Sarda orientalis has a wide range of distribution. Silas (1962) summarises its distribution as 'the east coast of South Africa ; Seychelles ; Somalia and Gulf of Aden ; west coast of India ; south west coast of Australia ; Philippines ; Japan ; Hawaii ; Pacific coast of Central American and Galapagos Islands, besides two records from the Atlantic.' Even in the Indian waters this species has not so far been recorded along the North East coast of India, Andamans sea and Laccadive sea. In the map showing its occurrence and fishing areas in the coasts of India Silas (1963) has shown its occurrence around Tuticorin in the South East coast but no published account is available for reference. This present record of the Oriental Bonito in Madras seems to be the first report of its occurrence along the North East coast of India.

A comparison of the various meristic counts of the present material with those observed by Silas (1962) in the West coast of India revealed remarkable similarity. All the fishes examined were juveniles measuring from 240 mm. to 260 mm. in total length. Excepting one specimen, which had only some remnants of skeleton of a certain big-scaled fish in its stomach, all the others had their stomachs practically empty and clean.

I am grateful to Shri P. R. Sadasivan Tampi for encouragement in the preparation of this note.

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