8-1989

Occurrence of Black Snapper, *Apsilus dentatus*, in the Gulf of Mexico

David L. Trimm
Texas Parks and Wildlife Department

T. Scott Searcy
Texas Parks and Wildlife Department

DOI: 10.18785/negs.1002.09

Follow this and additional works at: <https://aquila.usm.edu/goms>

Recommended Citation

Trimm, D. L. and T. Searcy. 1989. Occurrence of Black Snapper, *Apsilus dentatus*, in the Gulf of Mexico. *Northeast Gulf Science* 10 (2). Retrieved from <https://aquila.usm.edu/goms/vol10/iss2/9>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by The Aquila Digital Community. It has been accepted for inclusion in Gulf of Mexico Science by an authorized editor of The Aquila Digital Community. For more information, please contact Joshua.Cromwell@usm.edu.

Short Papers and Notes:

OCCURRENCE OF BLACK SNAPPER, *Apsilus dentatus* IN THE GULF OF MEXICO

On July 22, 1987, an interesting lutjanid (526 mm SL, 665 mm TL, 5.0 kg) was caught by Mr. Adolph Schultz approximately 103 miles southeast of Galveston, Texas, near the West Flower Gardens Bank, in 40 meters of water (Figure 1). Personnel at the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department Seabrook Marine Laboratory determined the fish to be a black snapper, *Apsilus dentatus* Guichenot, 1853. Identification was based on taxonomic characters from Vergara (1978) and Anderson (1987) and by descriptions of coloration from Böhlke and Chaplin (1968). Morphological features are as follows: girth 494 mm; lateral line scales 59; gill rakers (total) 23; dorsal-fin rays X, 10; anal-fin rays III, 8; and pectoral-fin rays 15. Because we have found no published records of this species occurring in the Gulf of Mexico, the capture of this specimen is especially important.

The genus *Apsilus* is distinguished from *Lutjanus* by, among other characters, the lack of scales on both dorsal and anal fins (Vergara 1978). Although the intense violet color exhibited by live specimens of *A. dentatus* has been noted to pale to a dark brown after death, the fish caught by Mr. Schulz retained a very distinctive violet tint even after freezing.

The black snapper primarily inhabits rocky bottom environments at depths of 40 (Druzhinin 1970, Thompson and Munro 1974) to 242 meters (Robins *et al.* 1986). It is a commonly recorded member of the West Indian ichthyofauna (Bölke and Chaplin 1968). Reports of black snapper from the Florida Keys, however, are rare (Robins *et al.* 1986).

Figure 1. Black snapper *Apsilus dentatus* collected from the West Flower Gardens Bank.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We would like to thank W. D. Anderson, Jr. (Grice Marine Biological Laboratory, College of Charleston) for his assistance in confirming the identification of our specimen and Hal Osburn (Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, Rockport Marine Laboratory) for reviewing this paper.

LITERATURE CITED

- Anderson, W. D. , Jr. 1987. Systematics of the fishes of the family Lutjanidae (Perciformes: Percoidae), the snappers. Pages 1-31. In: J. J. Polovina and S. Ralston (Eds.). Tropical snappers and groupers: Biology and fisheries management. Westview Press, Boulder and London.
- Böhlke, J. E. and C. C. G. Chaplin. 1968. Fishes of the Bahamas and adjacent tropical waters. Livingston Publ. Co., Wynnewood, Pa., 771 p.
- Druzhinin, A. D. 1970. The range and biology of snappers (Family Lutjanidae). J. Ichthyol., *Publ. by Amer. Fish. Soc.* 10(6): 717-736.
- Robins, C. R., G. C. Ray and J. Douglass. 1986. A field guide to the Atlantic Coast fishes of North America. Houghton Mifflin Co., Boston, Mass., 354 pp.
- Thompson, R. and J. L. Munro. 1974. The

biology, ecology, and bionomics of the snappers, Lutjanidae. Pages 94-109. *In*: J. L. Munro (Ed.), Caribbean Coral Reef Fishery Resources, ICLARM Stud., Rev. 7. Manila.

Vergara R., R. 1978. Lutjanidae. *In*: W. Fischer (Ed.). FAO species identification sheets for fishery purposes, Western Central Atlantic (fishing area 31). Vol. III.

David L. Trimm and T. Scott Searcy, Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, Seabrook Marine Laboratory Seabrook, Texas 77586.