

ART. XIII.—NOVA SCOTIAN ICHTHYOLOGY.—BY REV. D.
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VINCIAL MUSEUM.

(Read May 10, 1886.)

I PROPOSE to make a few observations upon certain fishes that have been added to our Museum Collection during last summer (1885.)

Among these are specimens of the black rudder fish, *Palinurus perciformis*, or *Lirus perciformis*. Last session I directed attention to the specimens that I had previously added. At the same time I mentioned that I had only seen two others. I therefore concluded that they were rare fishes. I find that this is not the case. During last summer they were very plentiful in our harbour. Four were brought to me alive. I put them into an aquarium and kept them alive for a few hours. I had no difficulty in identifying them as the black rudder fish, although they were certainly *not black* when living. On the following morning they were dead. Then they were black as they now appear, preserved in alcohol. Other specimens were secured, so that they now do not appear as rare fish. I find from the new work issued by the U. S. Fishery Commission that they were found in abundance—in schools—off our harbour, by G. Brown Goode and his associates when they were at Halifax with the *Speedwell* in 1877. It attains to the size of 10 to 12 inches “and is excellent eating.” Fisheries of the U. S., Vol. I, page 334, 1884.

Silver moon fish.
Selene argentea.

A fish having this name is mentioned and figured in the work just referred to. The young of it is said, in one or two instances to have been found as far north as Halifax, Nova Scotia. The specimen now presented is allied to those referred to. It was found in our harbour. Another was previously

received from Mr. Bazeley and was included in my Alcoholic Collection at the Fisheries Exhibition, London, 1883. Still another was brought to me for identification last summer.

The specimen now before us has only a general resemblance to that figured.

1st. The dorsal and ventral fins are very unlike in form.

2nd. Our specimen has a light black spot on either side.

This is on the mesial line formed by the vertebræ, and about half an inch from the tail. The dimensions of our fish:—From snout to point of tail two inches and two-tenths. The body is sub-circular, from snout to tail the length one inch and three-tenths. Its width is the same. These might be called diameters. It is as "thin as a sixpence." Brown Goode observes: "Their bodies are so thin that they can be dried in the sun without the use of preservatives, without the loss of form or colour." This was the case with our specimen, although it is now in alcohol for better preservation. "They are consequently of no importance for food."

Skipjack. *Scomberesox saurus*, or *stoveri*.

We are well supplied with specimens of this *brilliant* and singular fish. Almost all of them have a like history. They were swimming in our harbor. Boats came in their way and they leaped into the boats and thus were caught. One of which we read an account in a newspaper, alighted in a lady's lap causing considerable excitement. They are classed with flying fishes. "It is sometimes seen to rise to the surface in large schools and fly over a considerable space. When closely pursued by the tunny, bonito or porpoise they spring to the height of several feet, leap over each other in singular confusion and again sink beneath." Its power of springing must be chiefly ascribed to its tail and finlets.

Pilot fish.

Naucrates ductor.

Our specimen was brought to the Museum for identification. It must have been caught near our harbour. It is a pelagic fish. It receives its name from its habit of keeping

company with ships and large fish, especially sharks. It is rare in the Western Atlantic and our Museums have very few specimens.

Our specimen is full size, 10 to 11 inches in length. It is elegantly formed and has the usual bands across its body.

They are said to act as pilots for the sharks which they accompany. As one is reported to have led a shark to a hook baited with pork, they may be considered as not always safe pilots.

Mackerel, variety (?)

Three other specimens to which I direct your attention have the usual shape and appearance of mackerel so as to be regarded as such. The fisherman who caught these observed a difference and therefore brought them to me for identification.

There are 10 to 13 bands on the sides which run sub-parallel. Their length is from 9 to 10 inches. Their bands seem to be characteristic. I thought at first that they were striped *bonito*.
—DeKay.