

FIRST NOVA SCOTIAN AND SECOND CANADIAN RECORD OF ATLANTIC FANFISH, *PTERYCOMBUS BRAMA* FRIES, 1837 (BRAMIDAE)

While walking in shallow water at a beach near Taylors Head (44°48'N, 62°34'W) northeast of Halifax, Halifax County, Nova Scotia, 30 August 1980, Charles Stone picked up a strange fish which was silver with enormous black fins (Fig 1). The fish was alive but swimming on its side, and was kept alive for a short time in a bucket of seawater. We thank Mr. Stone for forwarding the specimen to the Nova Scotia Museum. The specimen was identified, using Mead's (1972) revision of the family Bramidae, as the Atlantic fanfish, *Pterycombus brama* Fries, 1837.

Pterycombus brama was not listed for the Atlantic coast of Canada by Leim and Scott (1966) or Legendre (1978). However, Mead (1972) listed one specimen for the Grand Banks which he described as "... archaic, eviscerated, twisted, frayed, broken and generally ... distorted ...". Our specimen, from about 1000 km westwards, is happily in better condition, the only damage being several splits in the membranes at the vertical fins and a milkiness of the cornea, presumably due to a day's delay in preservation. The specimen is catalogued as NMC80-1115 in the National Museum of Natural Sciences, National Museums of Canada, Ottawa.

We present the description in the format of Leim and Scott's *Fishes of the Atlantic coast of Canada* (1966). Values from our specimen are followed in parentheses by values drawn from Mead (1972) for adult specimens. The French common name was coined by Mr. Vianney Legendre.

Atlantic fanfish, *Pterycombus brama* Fries, 1837 Poisson-éventail atlantique

Description

Body elongate, compressed, greatest depth 2.7 (2.1-2.5) in standard length at base of pectoral fin; caudal peduncle slender. Head compressed, short, length 4.1 (3.5-4.2) in standard length; profile of underside curving into thorax, dorsal profile straight to dorsal fin. Mouth superior, almost vertical, 70° to horizontal axis; slender pointed teeth in jaws. Orbit large, horizontal diameter 3.2 (2.6-3.2) in head length. Fins: dorsal (1) 51 (48-53), very high anteriorly, equalling body depth, fin begins just behind orbit and ends on caudal peduncle; caudal deeply forked; anal 42 (40-42), resembling dorsal fin; pelvics small, 15; pectoral 19 (20-23), elongate, length exceeds head length. Scales large, 51 (48-53) in median longitudinal series, without lateral line canal in adults; enlarged scales form sheaths at bases of dorsal and anal fins. Scales cross body in front of dorsal fin. Vertebrae 48. Colour, bright silvery body in life; dorsal and pelvic fins black.

Distinctions

The great fan-like dorsal and anal fins distinguish the Atlantic fanfish from the other Canadian members of the family and all other species in the region.

Size

Our specimen is 183 mm in standard and 229 mm in total length; the species reaches 368 mm in standard length.

Range

From Jamaica north to Grand Banks including the Sargasso Sea in western North Atlantic, from off Spanish Sahara and off Spain, off northern Scotland to northern Norway in the eastern North Atlantic.

Canadian distribution

One specimen recorded previously from about the center of the Grand Banks (Mead, 1972). Our specimen is from Taylors Head area, Halifax County, Nova Scotia.

Biology and economics

Probably spawns throughout the year near the edge of the continental shelf off the east coast of Florida, in the Gulf Stream and adjacent parts of the Caribbean and Gulf of Mexico. The young seem to occur randomly between 25 and 300 m. One or two adults are caught in each winter longline set, in the *Brama brama* fishery off Spain.

Some small differences in counts and measurements between our specimen and Mead's (1972) description can probably be attributed to the small sample size; Mead had only 8 adult specimens available for study material.

References

- Legendre, V.** 1978. *Les Poissons de l'Atlantique Canadien: Leurs Noms*. Laboratoire de Recherches, Service de l'Aménagement et d'Exploitation de la Faune, Ministère du Tourisme, de la Chasse et de la Pêche, Montréal.
- Leim, A.H. and Scott, W.B.** 1966. Fishes of the Atlantic coast of Canada. *Fish. Res. Board Can. Bull.* 155: 1-485.
- Mead, G.W.** 1972. Bramidae. *Dana-Rep. Carlsberg Found.* 81: 1-166.

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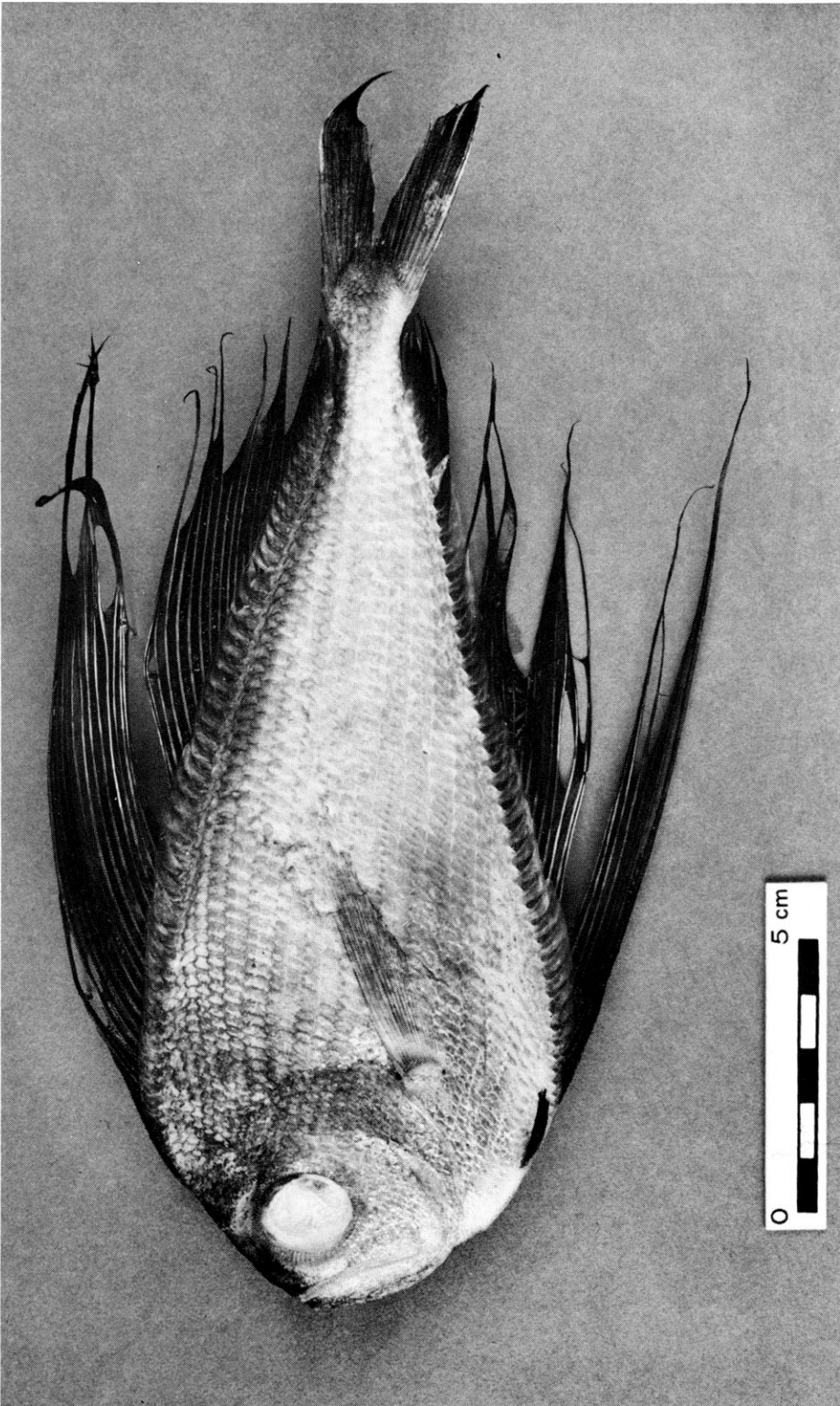


Fig 1. Atlantic fanfish, *Pterycombus brama*, from near Taylors Head, Halifax County (44°48'N, 62°34' W), captured on August 10, 1980. This specimen, NMC80-1115, represents the first Nova Scotian and second Canadian record of the species. National Museums of Canada, Photographic Div., Neg. No. AC-30-80-1.