

**A CASE OF COMPLETE ALBINISM IN THE MARINE CAT-FISH
TACHYSURUS DUSSUMIERI (CUVIER AND VALENCIENNES)**

ONE specimen of the marine cat-fish, *Tachysurus dussumieri* (Cuvier and Valenciennes) exhibiting complete albinism was collected on board a purse seiner of the Indo-Norwegian Project, on 5th July 1966, off Mandapam in Palk Bay (Long. 79° 2' Lat. 9° 21') at a depth of 5 fathoms. On removal from the net it was immediately transferred to a drum containing sea water, but it did not survive. Since this is the first instance of albinism recorded in *T. dussumieri*, particulars regarding the same are given below.

The albino cat-fish measured 48.5 cm. in total length and 41.6 cm. in standard length and weighed 1.403 kilograms. The stomach was found empty. It was a maturing female specimen and the diameter of the intraovarian eggs varied from 1.1 to 1.8 mm. The entire fish was dull white in colour and was devoid of any pigmentation. Except the adipose dorsal all the fins were somewhat pale reddish in colour, probably due to blood-shot condition. The posterior part of operculum and lateral ethmoid region of both sides were reddish. The same condition was also observed on frontal and supraoccipital regions. The barbels too were reddish. Eyes were somewhat white with a pinkish tinge. On preservation in formalin, the colour of the reddish tinge referred to in various parts of the body turned dark brown.

Several instances of albinism in other cat-fishes have been reported earlier. Dean (1923) referred a number of instances on this subject. Subsequently Hora (1927), Aitken (1937), Menzel (1944), McLane (1950) and Gupta and Bhowmik (1958) recorded albino cat-fishes. Dawson (1964) has listed a number of references relating to this subject in his 'Bibliography of anomalies of Fishes.'

Although there are a number of reports on partial albinism among Indian fishes, cases of complete albinism were reported only in a few instances. Jones and Pantalu (1942) have described a live albino eel *Anguilla bengalensis* Gray, which happens to be the first record of complete albinism among Indian fishes. Subsequently Gupta and Bhowmik (1958) reported on an albino cat-fish, *Arius jella* Day. So far as our information goes this phenomenon has not been recorded in *T. dussumieri* previously.

The body proportions, meristic counts and dentition are in conformity with those of this species. The specimen is deposited in the Reference Collection of the Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute under register No. CMFRI. F. 35/89a.

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*Original not consulted.