

ON AN ABNORMAL RAY FROM THE GULF OF KUTCH

A SINGLE male specimen of ray with pectoral fins free anteriorly (Figure) was observed on 8-4-1965 in the trawl catch of Department of Fisheries, Gujarat State, from a depth of 8-10 fathoms in the Gulf of Kutch. A brief description of the specimen is given below:

Disc length 107 mm.; disc width 225 mm.; tail length 51 mm.; head length 34 mm.; head width 46 mm.; length of rostral lobe 7 mm.; length of ventral fin 16 mm.; length of anterior lobe of pectoral 35 mm.; weight 115.9 gr. Body smooth; disc broad, width $2\frac{1}{10}$ times the length, and right half of disc broader than left half; tail short, slender, less than half the length of disc, without spines, and bears 5 dark bands alternating with white inter-spaces; no fin fold on tail; head distinct from disc and broader than long with a short blunt rostral lobe; pectoral

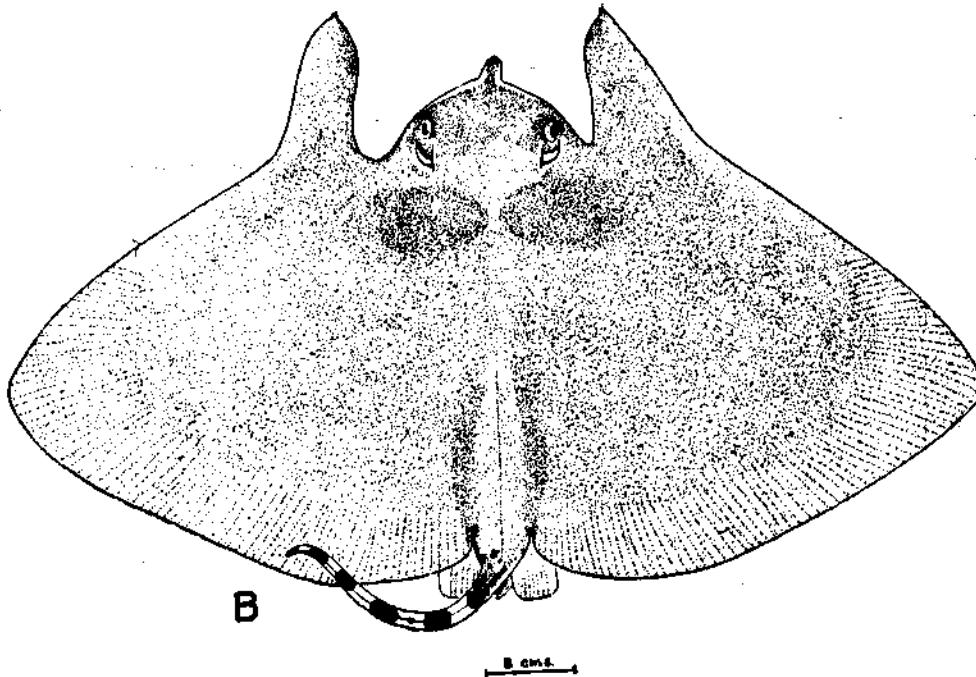


FIG. 1. The abnormal ray.
A. Photograph. B. A line drawing.

fins free anteriorly in the form of horns on either side of head ; a single series of minute pores present dorsally close to margin of disc ; dorsal fin wanting ; mouth wide ; teeth present in a single row on both the jaws ; colour of the fresh specimen dark brown above and whitish below.

The specimen resembles *Ceratoptera ehrenbergii* Day (1878), but the same has been considered by Bigelow and Schroeder (1953) as a monstrosity of *Gymnura poecilura* (Shaw). Bennet (1964) reported on a similar specimen from Vizhingam. However, the present specimen differs from the one caught at Vizhingam, in the following characters : The larger size ; shorter free portion of pectoral on either side, starting almost anterior to the first gill slit ; less distinct and broader head ; non-protruding eyes ; and teeth in a single row in both the jaws. Failure of the anterior lobes of the pectoral fins to fuse with the head during embryonic development of batoids has been reviewed by Gill (1896), Gudger (1933) and Bigelow and Schroeder (1953). Recent reports on such abnormalities are those of Luther (1961), Chhapgar (1964), Bennet (1964) and Templeman (1964).

The present specimen, therefore, is only an aberrant form of the genus *Gymnura* where the anterior lobe of pectoral fin on both sides had failed to unite with the head during its embryonic development. The specific identity of the specimen is difficult to fix due to the abnormality and its small size.

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