

**FIRST RECORD OF THE GIANT
SEADEVIL *Ceratias holbolli* FROM
CALIFORNIA, BASED UPON A
SPECIMEN FROM THE STOMACH
OF A SPERM WHALE**

A giant seadevil *Ceratias holbolli* Krøyer, 1845, the largest of the deep sea anglerfishes, was recovered from the stomach of a 13.0 m male sperm whale *Physeter catodon* that was killed on 13 November 1970, at lat. 37°50'N, long. 123°48'W (115 km west of San Francisco). This position is over the outer edge of the continental slope where the water is about 3,500m deep. The whale was taken by the catcher boat ALLEN CODY, Captain Douglas Campbell, of the Del Monte Fishing Company's whaling station in Richmond, California. Bernard Lenheim, then with the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), examined the stomach of the whale (Field No. 1970-53). Elbert H. Ahlstrom of the NMFS, John E. Fitch of the California Department of Fish and Game, and Robert J. Lavenberg of the Museum of Natural History of Los Angeles County identified the anglerfish, which is deposited in the collection of the latter institute (LACM 31841-1).

Although the giant seadevil is virtually cosmopolitan, it has not previously been collected nearer to California than Cocos Island, the Galapagos Islands, the Hawaiian Islands, and Japan (Clarke, 1950). The few metamorphosed specimens that have been collected were caught at depths of 120 to 4390m, but most catches shallower than 600m were made in Arctic waters (Bertelsen, 1951; Clarke, 1950; Grey, 1956). The species was originally described by Krøyer (1845) on the basis of a specimen collected off Greenland.

This seadevil was the only one that I and my assistants found in the stomachs of 552 sperm whales taken off central California that we examined from 1959 through 1970. Sperm whales are deep divers (they are known to descend as deep as 1,134m) and feed mostly on large squids, but they also eat many large demersal and mesopelagic fishes. *Ceratias holbolli* has previously been reported from the stomachs of sperm whales taken in the Antarctic at lat. 61°S, long. 103°E (Clarke, 1950), off Western Australia (Bannister, 1970), near the Falkland Islands (Korabel'nikov, 1959), off South Africa (Penrith, 1967), and around the Azores (Clarke, 1956).

Although the specimen is partially digested, it is essentially entire and much of its skin is intact; the illicium is present, but the esca is missing. The total length of the fish is about 63cm excluding the caudal rays, which are missing. When whole, it

was probably about 75 or 80cm long. The maximum length reported for this species is 120cm (Bertelsen, 1951). The specimen is doubtless a female; the dwarf males of this species are parasitic on the females.

The vernacular name "giant seadevil" was suggested by Carl L. Hubbs, Scripps Institution of Oceanography, and will be used in a forthcoming check list of California fishes. In the spelling of the specific name and the date of its original publication, I have followed the advice of W. I. Follett, California Academy of Sciences.

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