

ON THE NATURAL DISTRIBUTION OF THE FLATFISH *LAEOPS*  
*GUENTHERI* ALCOCK

On 25th January 1961, one specimen of *Laeops guentheri* Alcock measuring 107 mm. in total length was collected off the Mysore coast in 18 fathoms (12° 49' N. 74° 38' E.), while examining the composition of trawl catches. Subsequently, six more specimens measuring 60-100 mm. in total length could be collected from 20-30 fathoms and their northernmost limit was observed as 13° 03' N. 74° 33' E.

Norman (1927) described the habitat of *L. guentheri* as Persian Gulf, East Coast of India and Gulf of Marataban. The occurrence of this species, therefore, is a new record for the Mysore coast and for the west coast of India. This also extends the natural distribution of *L. guentheri* upto 13° 03' N. 74° 33' E. on the west coast of India. Along the east coast *L. guentheri* does not appear to have been recorded earlier south of Vizagapatam. However, on 1-9-1960 one specimen measuring 72 mm. was collected from trawl catches by one of us (M.J.P.) in 7 fathoms off Tuticorin. It is thus apparent that this species may not be very rare in the trawl catches along our coast and probably, its occurrence in the Ceylon waters can be reasonably expected, although Munro (1955) has not recorded the genus *Laeops* from Ceylon.

Distinguishing characters of the species (After Norman 1927).

Teeth in villiform bands in each jaw, almost entirely confined to the blind side ; maxillary hardly reaching anterior edge of eye ; dorsal with 97 to 102 rays ; anal with 77 to 81 rays.

*Laeops guentheri* Alcock

*Laeops guentheri*, Alcock, *Ann. Mag. Nat. Hist.*, Ser. 6, VI, p. 438 (1890).

*J. Asiat. Soc. Bengal*, LXV, pt. 2, p. 328 (1896) ; *Illust. Zool. 'Investigator'*, *Fishes*, pl. xxii, fig. 4 (1898).

*Sciaenectes macrophthalmus* (part), Jenkins, *Mem. Ind. Mus.*, III, p. 27 (1910).

Most of the characters of *L. guentheri* studied are in agreement with the description given by Norman (1927), except the following which showed some variations.

Meristic counts : D. 96-102 ; A. 76-80.

Morphometric measurements : Head 5.31 to 5.94 ; depth 2.81 to 3.14 ; eye 2.66 to 3.27 ; maxillary 3.60 to 4.25 ; length of left pectoral 1.50 to 1.83 and right pectoral 2.00 to 2.75 in head length.

(Variations noted from eight specimens measuring 60 to 107 mm. in total length).

The head in the specimens examined here is smaller (Norman's measurement for head being 4.33 to 5), however, this does not confuse their identity with *L. parviceps* Günther, from the Arafura Sea, which has in addition to a smaller head, a less arched dorsal profile and larger number of dorsal (104) and anal (86) rays.

We are grateful to Dr. E. G. Silas for his helpful suggestions and for confirming the identification of the specimen from Tuticorin.

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