

**A NOTE ON HOST SPECIFICITY OF THE ISOPOD PARASITE,
NEROCILA SP.**

Host specificity is very strongly expressed in a great number of fish parasites, especially in the majority of ectoparasites like isopods. While engaged in the length frequency studies of the Indian Herring, *Ilisha filigera* (Val.) landed by bull trawlers of the New India Fisheries Company Limited at Sassoon Docks, the isopod parasite, *Nerocila* sp. was seen very commonly in *Ilisha indica* during the months of December and February. Though this has been already observed by Chidambaram and Devidas Menon (1945) in Calicut, the case of host specificity among the species of the same genus has not been pointed out so far.

Indian Herring (locally called 'Kati') are mainly represented in trawler catches by *Ilisha filigera* (Val.) though occasionally *I. indica* are also landed in small quantities.

TABLE

Date of landing	Region where caught	No. of <i>I. filigera</i> examined	No. infected	No. of <i>I. indica</i> examined	No. infected
16-12-59	Kutch	44	Nil	132	53
23-2-60	Kutch	76	Nil	75	20

It can be seen from Table that though both the species were caught in the same region, the parasite was found to occur only in *I. indica*. The seat of infection was on the caudal peduncle and also the inside of the gill chambers (Figs. 1 & 2). They were found attached to the host by hook-like projections of their man-

dibles and first maxillae and first two thoracic legs. In all cases in the attached position the body was directed towards the anterior end of the fish. It is believed

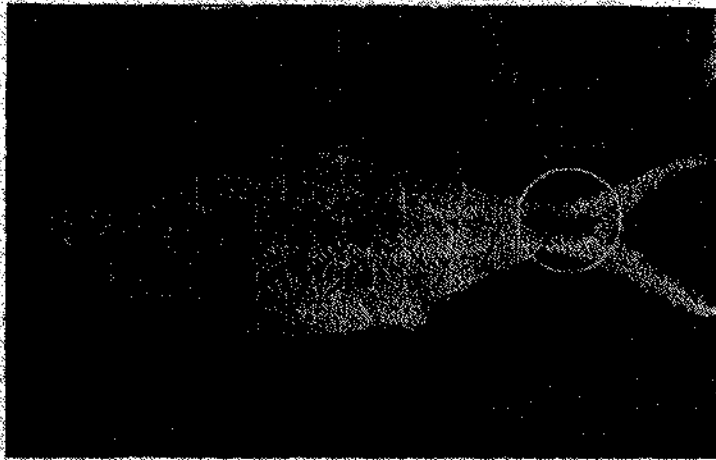


FIG. 1. *Ilisha indica* showing ectoparasite, *Nerocilia* sp. on the caudal peduncle.



FIG. 2. *Ilisha indica* showing the parasitic infection by *Nerocilia* sp. attached to the inside of the right and left gill covers.

that the development of specificity in all those ectoparasites has been promoted by the combination of two factors: the uniformity of diet (blood or epithelium) and morphological adaptation to the particular kind of gill lamellae, epithelium or scales. The host specificity of fish parasites helps the fisheries workers to classify the species of fishes.

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REFERENCE

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