

Names of the Hakes

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Most kinds of fishes do not have a legal or official common name, and common names in use for any particular species may vary from one region to another, from one group of users to another, and even with size, season, or sex. Thus a biological species may have one or more common names, and equally, or even more troublesome, two or more species may have the same common name. The nature of common names and their relationship to Latinized scientific names has been discussed at greater length by Cohen (1974).

The origins of the word hake are not at all clear. According to the Oxford English Dictionary the first usage was in the 14th or 15th century, and the word as presently understood refers in general to the genus *Merluccius* and several other genera of gadoid (cod-like) fishes.

Fish species classified in the genus *Merluccius* as well as several other genera are often considered to be members of a family Merlucciidae, which although related to is distinct from the Gadidae or cod family proper (Marshall and Cohen, 1973). The various named species of *Merluccius* are rather similar in appearance, and there is not at this time any good way to assign the correct scientific name to *Merluccius* from many regions of the world. There may be as few as 4 or as many as 15 or more different biological species. The taxonomy of *Merluccius* is being studied at present by a Japanese ichthyologist, Tadashi Inada. Whatever may be the number and correct scientific names of *Merluccius*

species, all are known in English speaking countries as hake.

Other English language names also are used for *Merluccius*, the chief being whiting. In a study of the taxonomy of North and South American *Merluccius* (Ginsberg, 1954), whiting was used as a general name for all species of the genus. *Merluccius bilinearis* (Fig. 1) from the western North Atlantic is called whiting as well as silver hake (Bigelow and Schroeder, 1953), and in New Zealand *M. australis* is known as whiting or hake (Graham, 1956). The U.S. Food and Drug Administration has approved the designation as whiting of five nominal species of *Merluccius*: *bilinearis* from the east coast of North America; *productus* from the west coast of North

America, *capensis* from South Africa; *gayi* from Chile; and *hubbsi* from Argentina. In South Africa, stockfish is another name for *Merluccius* (Smith, 1954).

Hake is used as a common name for a number of kinds of fishes other than *Merluccius*. Among the Gadidae are six species of *Urophycis* from the western Atlantic (Bigelow and Schroeder, 1953; Bailey et al., 1970): *chuss*, red or squirrel hake; *cirratus*, Gulf hake; *earlii*, Carolina hake; *floridanus*, southern hake; *regius*, spotted hake (Fig. 2); *tenuis*, white, black, mud, or Boston hake. Several other species of *Urophycis* live along the east coast of South America but do not have English language common names. The related gadid genus *Phycis* has one western Atlantic species, *P. chesteri* (Fig. 3), called the longfinned hake (Bigelow and Schroeder, 1953; Bailey et al., 1970), and two eastern Atlantic species known as forkbeards. Two members of the gadoid family Moridae must be listed, the nearly cosmopolitan deepsea *Antimora rostrata* (Fig. 4), known as blue hake (Bigelow and Schroeder, 1953), and

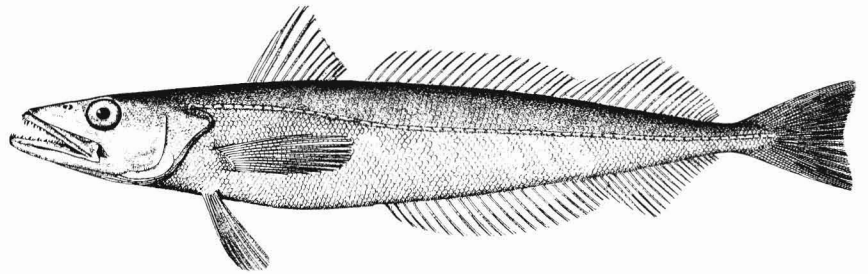


Figure 1.—*Merluccius bilinearis* from the western North Atlantic, where it is called hake or whiting.

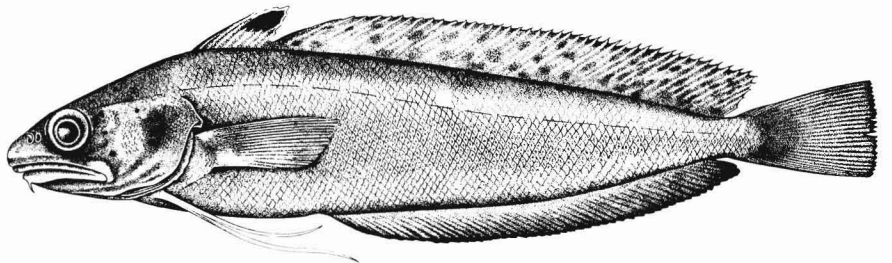


Figure 2.—*Urophycis regius*, a common fish of the U.S. east coast, where it is known as spotted hake.

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the New Zealand *Lotella rhacina*, called southern hake or rock cod (Graham, 1956). Finally, *Rexea solandri* (Fig. 5), a member of the Gempylidae or snake mackerel family, and not all related to the cods, has hake as an alternative name in both New Zealand (Graham, 1956; Whitley, 1968) and Australia (Munro, 1958).

As noted above the name whiting is used interchangeably with hake for *Mercuccius*; however, it is used also for fishes that are not called hakes. Among them are three species of

European Gadidae (Wheeler, 1969): *Merlangius merlangus*, whiting; *Trisopterus luscus*, whiting pout, an alternate name for bib; and *Micromesistius poutassou*, blue whiting (caught rarely off the U.S. east coast where it has no common name). Whiting is also an alternate name for the eastern North Pacific gadid *Theragra chalcogramma*, often called walleye pollock (Hart, 1973; Bailey et al., 1970). Members of the genus *Menticirrhus* of the croaker family Sciaenidae, not at all closely related to

gadoids and with three Atlantic and one Pacific U.S. species, are known collectively as whittings, although each also has other common names (Hildebrand and Schroeder, 1928; Bailey et al., 1970). Species belonging to several other families of fishes unrelated to gadids are known as whittings (Scott, 1962); among them are the spiny-rayed Sillaginidae of the Indian Ocean and western Pacific, and the Odacidae, called rock whittings, wrasse-like fishes of Australia and New Zealand. Finally sand whiting is listed as an alternate for the bothid flatfish *Scopthalmus aquosus*, most commonly known as windowpane (Bailey et al., 1970).

Obviously, the nomenclature of hakes and whittings is complex. Positive identification of a species referred to under these names may require reference to a Latinized scientific name; although, even some of these are subject to question.

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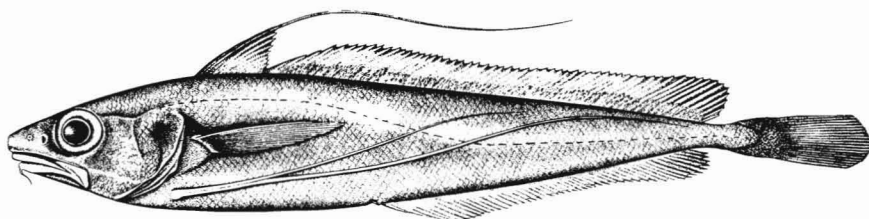


Figure 3.—*Phycis chesteri*, the longfinned hake, found on the continental slopes of eastern North America.

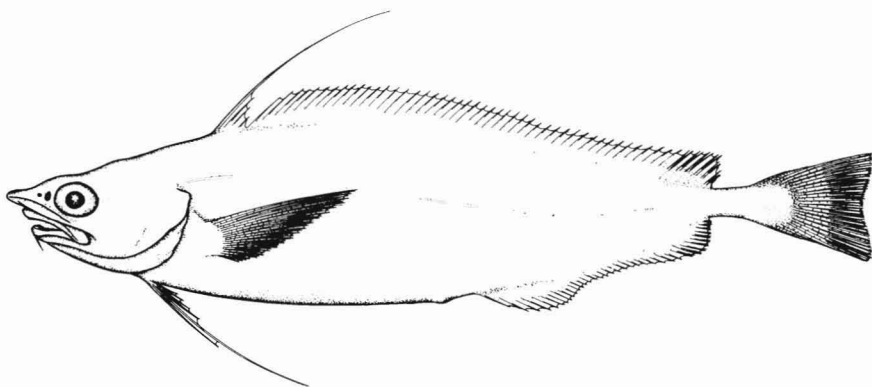


Figure 4.—*Antimora rostrata*, a deepsea fish living in many of the world's seas, is known as the blue hake.

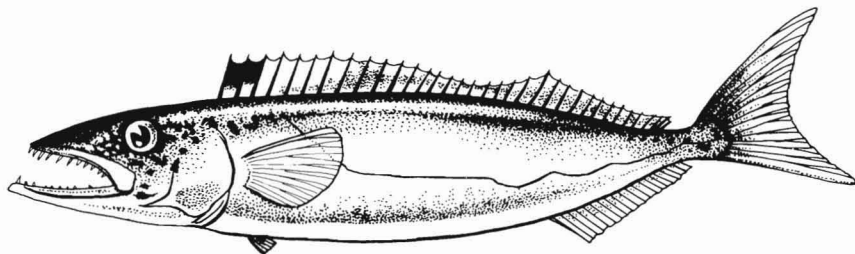


Figure 5.—*Rexea solandri* from New Zealand and Australia, where it is called hake or king barracouta.