

First record of pompano dolphinfish, *Coryphaena equiselis* (Linnaeus, 1758) off Chennai coast in Bay of Bengal

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On 5.9.2009, a catch comprising 15 specimens of pompano dolphinfish, *Coryphaena equiselis* (Linnaeus, 1758) was landed at Chennai Fisheries Harbour by mechanised gillnet. The mechanised gillnets operated usually at a depth between 30 and 50 m at a distance of 30-40 km north of Chennai towards Andhra Pradesh. Since, trawlnets and mechanised gillnets are the main fishing gears operated off Chennai coast, fishes belonging to the

family Coryphaenidae formed part of regular landings by these two gears. Normally common dolphinfish, *Coryphaena hippurus* formed regular fishery along this coast. *C. equiseli* (Fig. 1) is very rare and often the fishermen and the fishery biologists might have misidentified this species to the common dolphinfish *C. hippurus*. So far this species has not been recorded to occur along this coast, probably owing to its oceanic occurrence



Fig. 1. *Coryphaena equiselis*

which rarely frequent the inshore waters. This species is an important game fish in northern South America (Fishbase). Reported to attain a size of 75 cm, the adults of this species appear to be more strictly oceanic when compared to the common dolphinfish, *C. hippurus*. This species is observed

to form schools, which follow the moving boats and sometimes found to occur under floating objects in the open sea. It is found to feed on small fishes and oceanic squids. Spawning occurs in oceanic waters and the eggs and larvae are pelagic. Always it is marketed in fresh condition and considered an excellent food fish.

Length measurements of the 15 specimens were taken. The total length ranged between 232 and 321 mm with an average size of 289.9 ± 26.36 mm and weighed between 137 and 251 g with an average weight of 202 g. Sex ratio of 25% for females and 75% for males were noticed. Most of the ovaries were observed to be in maturing stages.