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First record of Cobia (*Rachycentron canadum*) (Pisces: Rachycentridae) at the coast of Madeira Island (NE Atlantic Ocean)

With 2 figures

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ABSTRACT: The Cobia *Rachycentron canadum* is recorded from Madeira Island for the first time. An individual of this species was encountered and video-documented while SCUBA-diving in about 12 m depth at the south coast of this island.

Keywords: Pisces, Teleostei, Rachycentridae.

RESUMO: A espécie *Rachycentron canadum* é registado, pela primeira vez, na ilha da Madeira. Um indivíduo desta espécie foi encontrado e documentado através de vídeo durante um mergulho em 12 m de profundidade na costa sul da ilha.

Palavras-chave: Pisces, Teleostei, Rachycentridae.

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INTRODUCTION

WIRTZ *et al.* (2008) summarized the knowledge about coastal fishes of Madeira Island. Since then, three more shallow water species have been recorded in the area: *Gobius niger* Linnaeus, 1758 and *Lebetus guilleti* (Le Danois, 1913) by ARAÚJO & WIRTZ (2015) and *Torpedo torpedo* (Linnaeus, 1758) by BISCOITO *et al.* (2018). We here note the presence of an additional species, the Cobia *Rachycentron canadum* (Linnaeus, 1766).

MATERIAL AND METHODS

The observation was made while SCUBA diving at an artificial reef in the area between Paúl do Mar and Jardim do Mar, at the south coast of Madeira Island (Fig. 1).

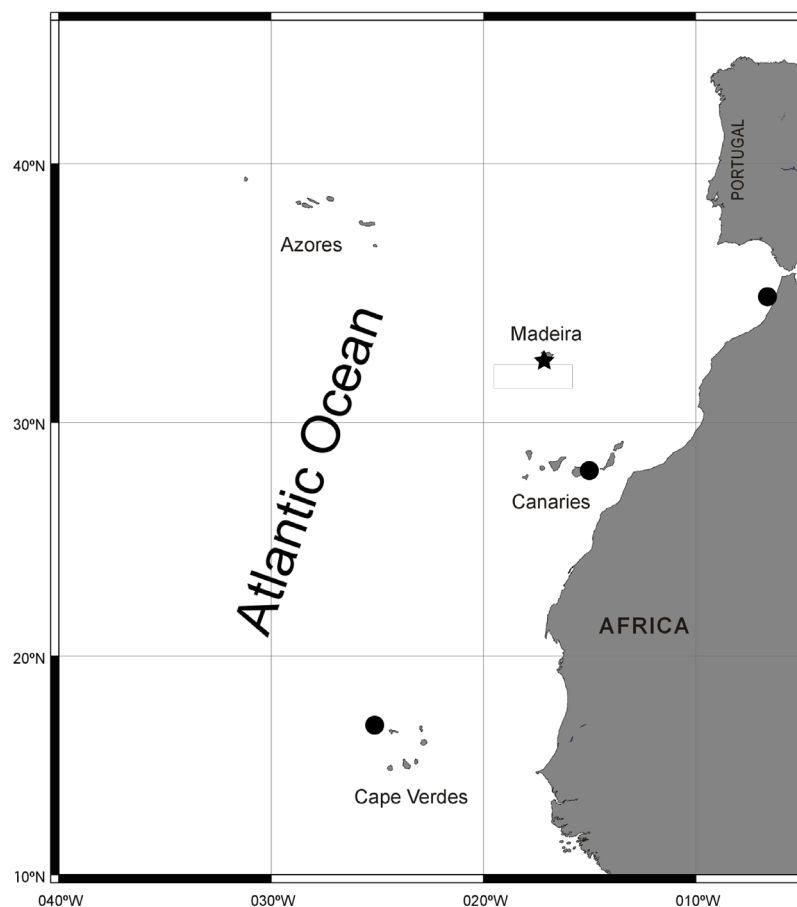


Fig. 1 – Known records of *Rachycentron canadum* in the NE Atlantic Ocean (★ present record; ● other records (see text)).

RESULTS

An individual of *Rachycentron canadum* was encountered in about 12 m depth (Fig. 2). The animal – estimated total length about 80 cm – was resting on the sand close to large boulders and started to swim when the divers approached it. A video sequence documenting the animal and this behaviour can be seen at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0C6AKYP8Uhw>. The colour of this individual appears unusual for this species: head and tail and a broad mid-lateral band were black, but the belly and back were white; pectoral fins white, tail fin black, dorsal fin black with a white margin.



Fig. 2 – *Cobia Rachycentron canadum* ca. 12 m of depth at the South coast of Madeira, between Paúl do Mar and Jardim do Mar.

DISCUSSION

Excepting the central and eastern Pacific Ocean, the *Cobia Rachycentron canadum* is a circumglobal (sub)tropical species (SHAFFER & NAKAMURA, 1989). Maximum size appears to be 1.6 m and at a size of about 80 cm the animal would have been probably one-year-old (FRANKS *et al.*, 1999).

In the Northeastern Atlantic, *Cobia* has been recorded from the Cape Verde Islands (FREITAS *et al.*, 2018), the coast of Morocco (MONOD, 1973) and the Canary Islands (BRITO *et al.*, 2005) (Fig. 1). Thus, its discovery at Madeira Island was to be expected.

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