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A LANTERN FISH, HYGOPHUM BENOITI (COCCO, 1838), WASHED ASHORE IN THE NETHERLANDS (PISCES, MYCTOPHOIDEI, MYCTOPHIDAE)

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ABSTRACT

A small Lantern Fish, Hygophum benoiti (Cocco, 1838), was washed ashore at the beach of the village of Zandvoort in the Netherlands. This is the first record of a member of the family Myctophidae in the coastal waters of the Netherlands, and the northernmost record for the species. The occurrence of the species in the northern part of the North Atlantic is discussed, and the specimen is illustrated.

On June 3rd, 1971, Master Maarten Stock found a little Lantern Fish (fig. 1) on the beach of Zandvoort (52°22'N, 04°31'E) about 25 kilometers west of Amsterdam. Although the belly region was damaged, the specimen could be identified by the arrangement of its photophores as Hygophum benoiti (Cocco, 1838). It has two distinct maculae posterolaterales (POL), and two maculae praecaudales (Prc), of which the posterior one (Prc_2) is situated midway between the lateral line and the lower edge of the body (cf. fig. 2). The latter character is present in H. benoiti only, the eight other species of Hygophum having the Prc_2 on the level of the lateral line or slightly lower. The presence of one undivided supracaudal luminous gland, and the size of the specimen (tl 45.8 mm) indicate that the specimen of Zandvoort is an adult male.

H. benoiti is common in the Mediterranean, Aegean, and Marmora Seas (Becker, 1965). The species is found also in the North Atlantic Ocean between the parallels of approximately 20° and 43° N (Bolin, 1959; Becker, 1967). In 1910 the "Michael Sars" caught one small specimen (11.5 mm) at station 81 (48°02'N, 39°55'W), and one specimen (11.0 mm) at station 82 (48°24'N, 36°53'W) at considerable depth (1000 meters of wire). Another record (one specimen, 15.0 mm) is known from

a surface haul southwest of Grand Bank (42°53'N, 54°09'W) (cf. Leim & Scott, 1966). As far as known the species never has been recorded from localities further northeast. Although the possibility exists that the occurrence of the specimen at Zandvoort can be explained by transportation in ballast water from subtropical areas, this seems extremely unlikely, since the specimen was in excellent condition, and it is known that Lantern Fishes are very fragile. This is not the first time that a specimen of a fish species from tropical or subtropical waters is found in the seas of northern Europe (cf. Krefft, 1961; Nijssen, 1966).

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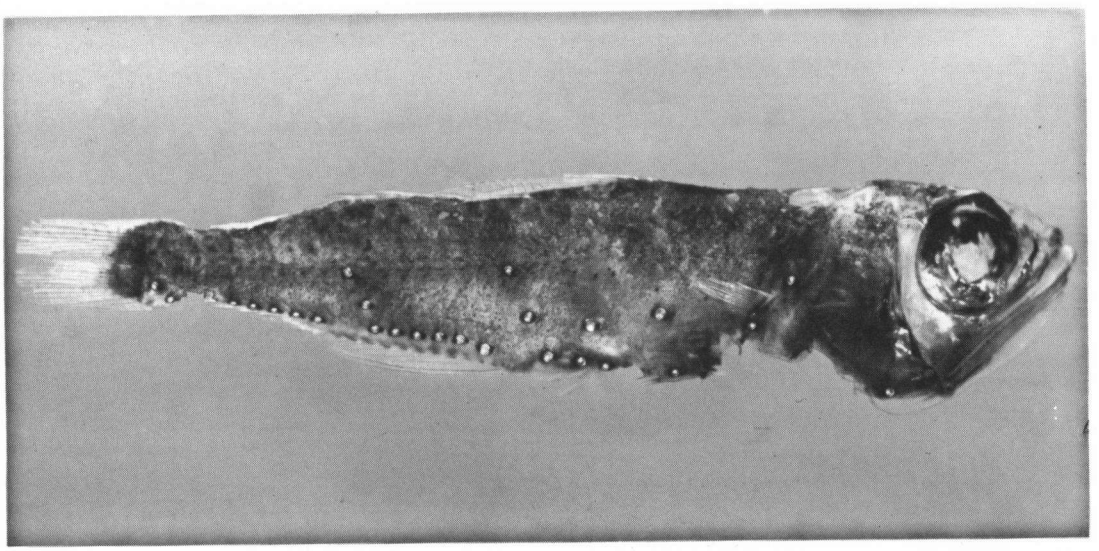

Figure 1: Hygophum benoiti (Cocco, 1838), adult male, tl 45.8 mm, washed ashore at Zandvoort, the Netherlands (ZMA 110.360).

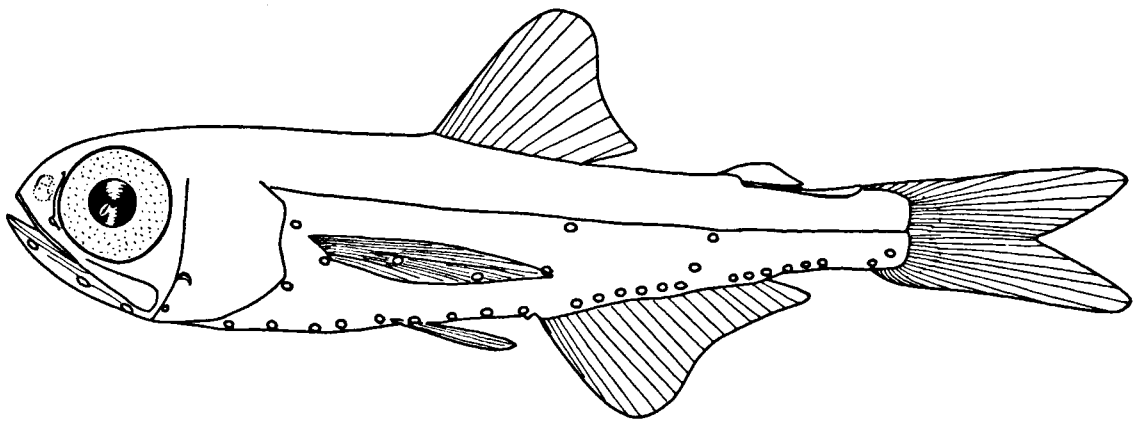

Figure 2: Arrangment of the photophores in Hygophum benoiti (after Tåning, 1932).

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