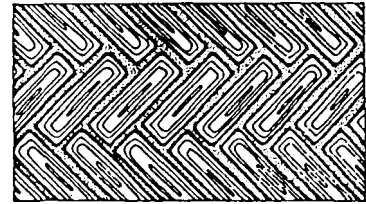


2.9 FAMILY MURAENOLEPIDIDAE

MURAENOL

FAO Names: En - Moray cods; Fr- Gadomurenes; Sp - Gadimorenas.

General Features : Body long and compressed. Head small, with a mental barbel; gill openings restricted; not extending above the pectoral fin base. No spines in fins; dorsal, caudal and anal fins joined together; 2 dorsal fins, the first with only 1 ray (dorsal filament); a single anal fin; pectoral fin rays 10 to 13; pelvic fins thoracic in position, with 5 rays, of which the 2 or 3 outer rays are prolonged and at least partially free. Lateral line not extending to hind part of body. Scales elongate, non-imbricate, set at right angles to each other, embedded in the skin which appears smooth (Fig. 816). **Colour :** greyishbrown to reddish, often iridescent reflections.



arrangement of scales (schematic) Fig. 816

Habitat, Distribution and Biology : The muraenolepids are restricted to the cold-temperate waters of the southern Hemisphere. They were considered a typically Antarctic family by Andriashev (1965), but De Witt (1971) believes that they are more recent invaders of the Southern Ocean. Muraenolepids live near the sea bottom at moderate depths on the continental shelf and the upper part of the slope, but feed primarily on zooplankton.

Interest to Fisheries : Moray cods are occasionally taken with bottom trawls, but none of the species appear to be of commercial importance at present.

Remarks : The four species described in a single genus, *Muraenolepis*, are not well known and a revision of the family is needed.

***Muraenolepis* Günther, 1880**

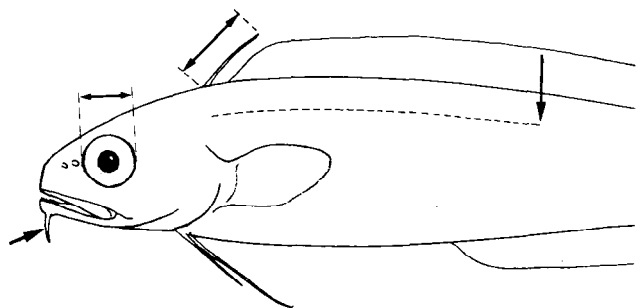
MURAENOL Mur

Genus with Reference : *Muraenolepis* Günther, 1880, Zool.Chall.Exped., 6:17

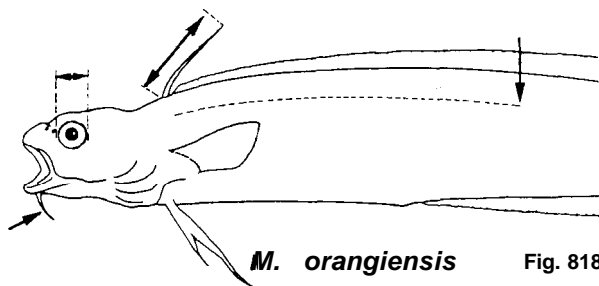
Diagnostic Features : See family.

Key to species:

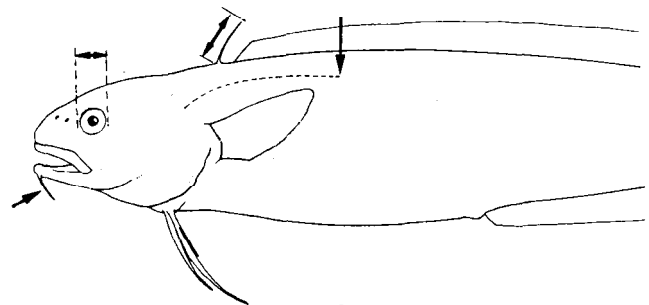
- 1a. Lateral line reaching backward to below middle of second dorsal fin (Figs 817, 818)
 - 2a. Filament of first dorsal fin equal to, or a little longer than eye diameter; mental barbel shorter than eye diameter (Fig. 817) *M. marmoratus*
 - 2b. Dorsal filament 3 times longer than eye diameter; mental barbel equal to eye diameter (Fig. 818) *M. orangiensis*
- 1b. Lateral line reaching backward slightly beyond tips of pectoral fins (Figs 819,820)
 - 3a. Dorsal filament no longer than twice the eye diameter; mental barbel longer than eye diameter (Fig. 819) *M. microps*



M. marmoratus Fig. 817



M. orangiensis Fig. 818

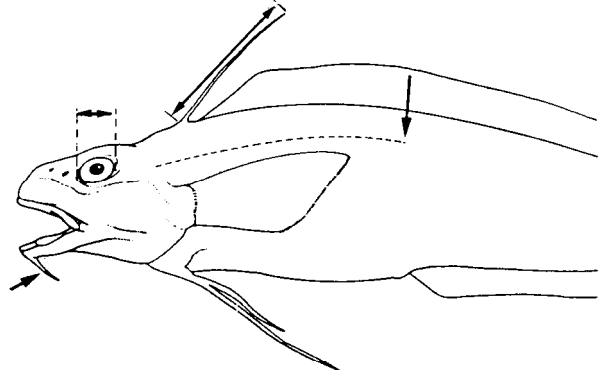


M. microps Fig. 819

3b. Dorsal filament 4 times or more than the eye diameter; mental barbel equal to eye diameter (Fig. 820) *M. microcephalus*

List of Species

- Muraenolepis marmoratus* Günther, 1880
- Muraenolepis microcephalus* Norman, 1932
- Muraenolepis microps* Lönnberg, 1905
- Muraenolepis orangiensis* Vaillant, 1907



M. microcephalus Fig. 820

Muraenolepis marmoratus Günther, 1880

Fig. 821

MURAENOL Mur 1

Scientific Name with Reference : *Muraenolepis marmoratus* Günther, 1880

Synonyms : None

FAO Names : En - Marbled moray cod; Fr - Gadomurene marbree; Sp - Gadimorena jaspeada.

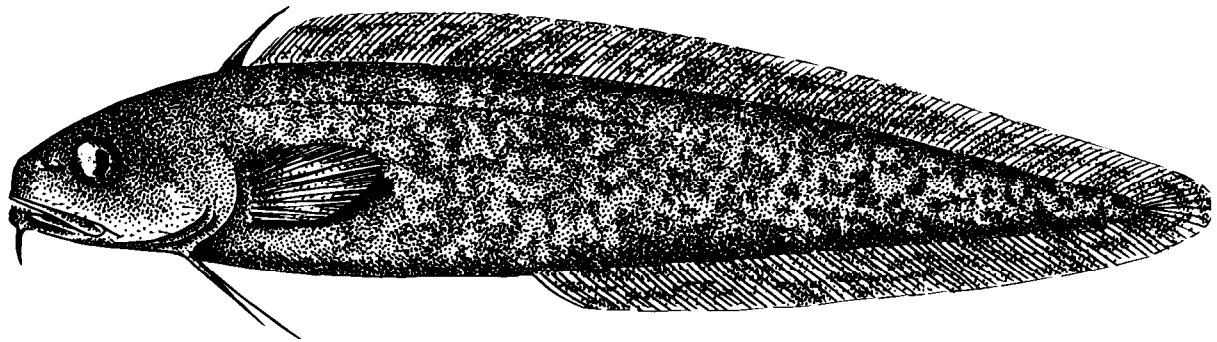


Fig. 821

Geographical Distribution : Only known from the Crozet, Kerguelen and Heard Islands (Fig. 822).

Habitat and Biology : Inhabits waters over the continental shelf and slope, from 30 to 1 600 m depth. Feeds on zooplankton.

Size : Maximum 40 cm; common to 30 cm.

Interest to Fisheries : Commonly taken as bycatch in bottom trawls (Kerguelen fisheries), but no separate statistics are available.

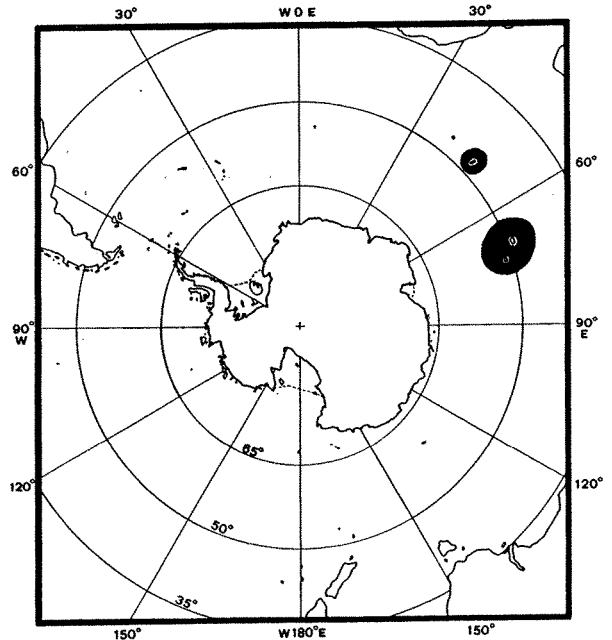


Fig. 822

Muraenolepis microcephalus Norman, 1937

Fig. 823

MURAENOL Mur 2

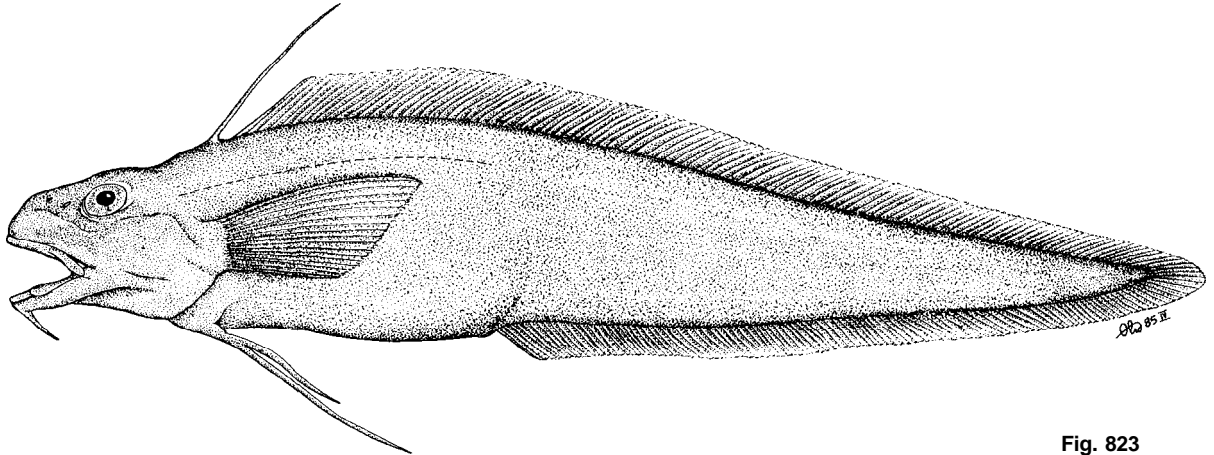
Scientific Name with Reference : *Muraenolepis microcephalus* Norman, 1937**Synonyms** : None**FAO Names** : **En** - Smallhead moray cod; **Fr** - Gadamurene microcephale; **Sp** - Gadimorena microcefala

Fig. 823

Diagnostic Features : Body depth about 5.5 times in standard length. Head rather small, its length 5.7 to 6 times in standard length; eye diameter 5.3 to 5.8 times in head length; interorbital width 4 times in head length and larger than eye diameter; mental barbel equal to eye diameter. Dorsal filament (single ray in first dorsal fin) more than 4 times the eye diameter; pectoral fins not extending backward to anus when appressed; outer 2 rays of pelvic fins filamentous, of different lengths. Lateral line reaching backward slightly beyond tips of pectoral fins. **Colour**: brownish-grey, with iridescent hues.

Geographical Distribution : Scotia Ridge (South Georgia, Sandwich Islands), South Orkney and South Shetland Islands, northern part of Antarctic Peninsula and Enderby coast (Fig. 824).

Habitat and Biology : Inhabits waters over the continental shelf and slope. Feeds on zooplankton.

Size : Maximum 30 cm; common to 27 cm.

Interest to Fisheries : Taken occasionally as bycatch in bottom trawls around the Islands of the Scotia Arch. Probably used only for fishmeal.

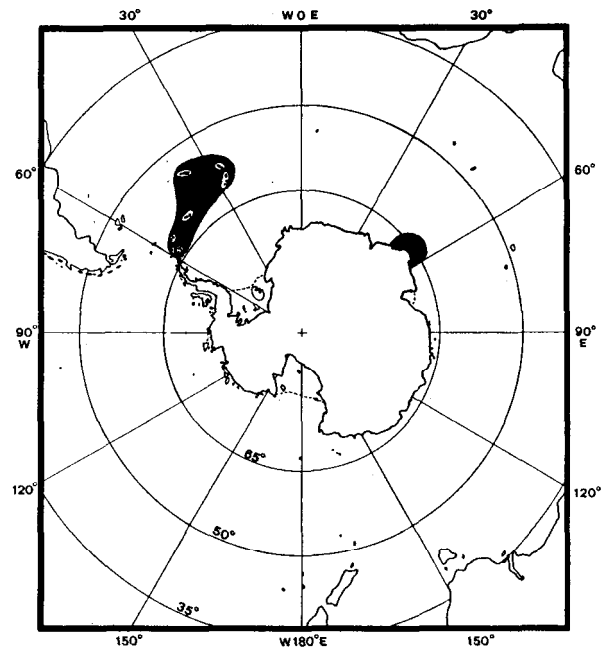


Fig. 824

Muraenolepis microps Lönnberg, 1905

Fig. 825

MURAENOL Mur 3

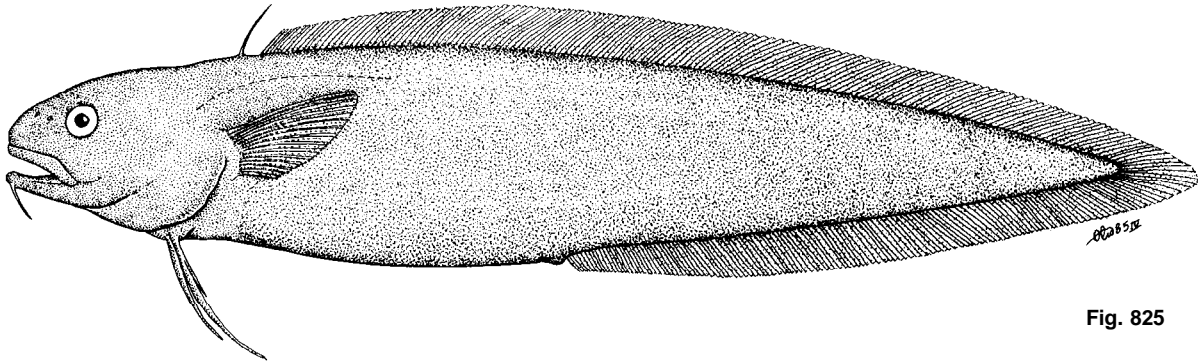
Scientific Name with Reference : *Muraenolepis microps* Lönnberg, 1905**Synonyms** : None**FAO Names** : **En** - Smalleye moray cod; **Fr** - Gadomurène petit oeil; **Sp** - Gadimorena ojichica.

Fig. 825

Diagnostic Features : Body depth 4.8 times in standard length. Head length about 5.6 times in standard length, head profile over eye distinctly curved; eye diameter 5.3 times in head length; interorbital width about 4.5 times in head length; mental barbel longer than eye diameter. Dorsal filament (single ray in front of dorsal fin) variable in length, but never longer than twice the eye diameter. Outer rays of pelvic fin filamentous, of different length. Lateral line arched above pectoral fin, reaching backward to slightly beyond pectoral tips. **Colour**: uniform grey-brown, with iridescent hues.

Geographical Distribution : Coasts of Antarctic Peninsula, South Georgia, Sandwich, Orkney and Shetland Islands and Victoria Land (Fig. 826).

Habitat and Biology : Inhabits waters between 10 and 1 600 m depth. Feeds mainly on zooplankton.

Size : Maximum 35 cm; common to 27 cm.

Interest to Fisheries : Taken occasionally as bycatch in bottom trawls around the Islands of Scotia Arch. Probably used only for fishmeal.

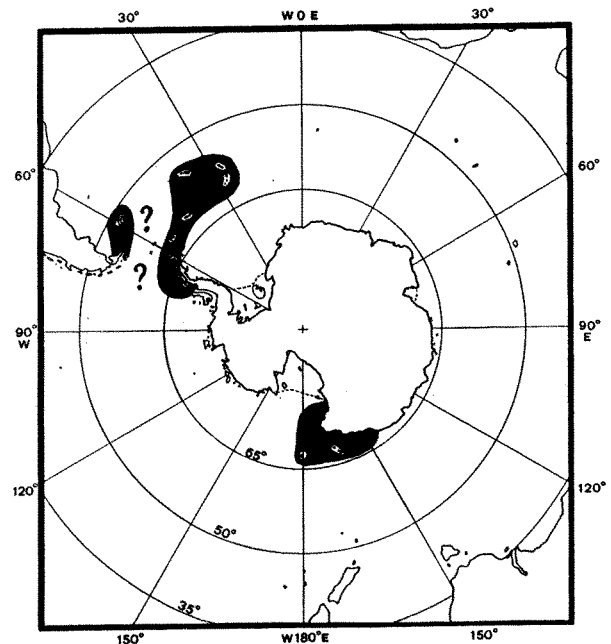


Fig. 826

Muraenolepis orangiensis Vaillant, 1907

Fig. 827

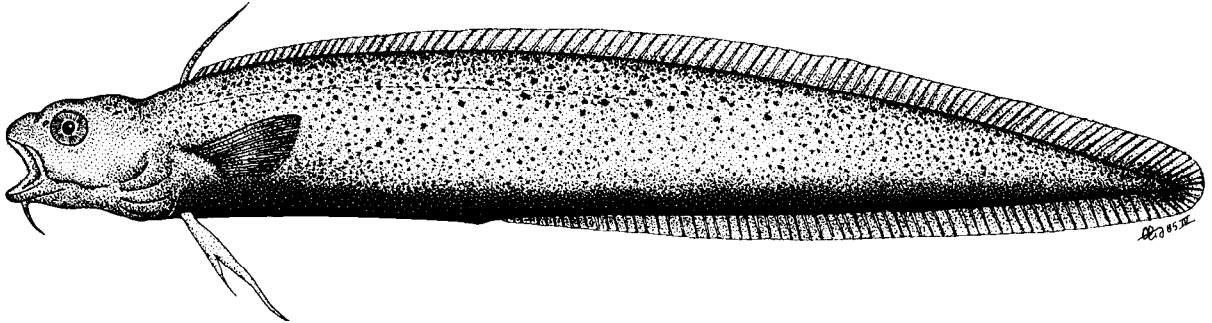
MURAENOL Mur 4**Scientific Name with Reference** : *Muraenolepis orangiensis* Vaillant, 1907**Synonyms** : None**FAO Names** : **En** - Patagonian moray cod; **Fr** - Gadamurene de Patagonie; **Sp** - Gadimorena patagonica.

Fig. 827

Diagnostic Features : Body depth 6.5 times in standard length. Head small, its length about 6.3 times in standard length; eye diameter more than 5 times in head length and greater than interorbital width; mental barbel equal to eye diameter. Dorsal filament (single ray in first dorsal fin) 3 times longer than eye diameter; pectoral fins rather short, not extending backward to anus when appressed; outer ray of pelvic fins filamentous. Lateral line reaching backward to below middle of second dorsal fin. **Colour**: grey-reddish; body covered with numerous small black dots; abdomen black.

Geographical Distribution : *Muraenolepis orangiensis* has been reported from Patagonian waters and from the Kerguelen, Heard and Crozet Islands (Fig. 828).

Habitat and Biology : Inhabits waters over the continental shelf and slope from 140 to 600 m depth. Feeds on zooplankton.

Size : Maximum 30 cm; common to 20 cm.

Interest to Fisheries : Taken as bycatch in bottom trawls in shelf and slope waters around the Kerguelen Islands.

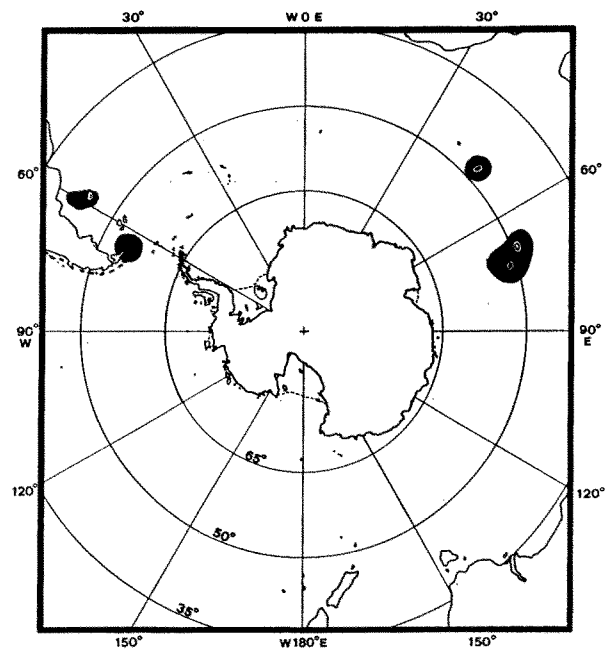


Fig. 828