BONY FISHES

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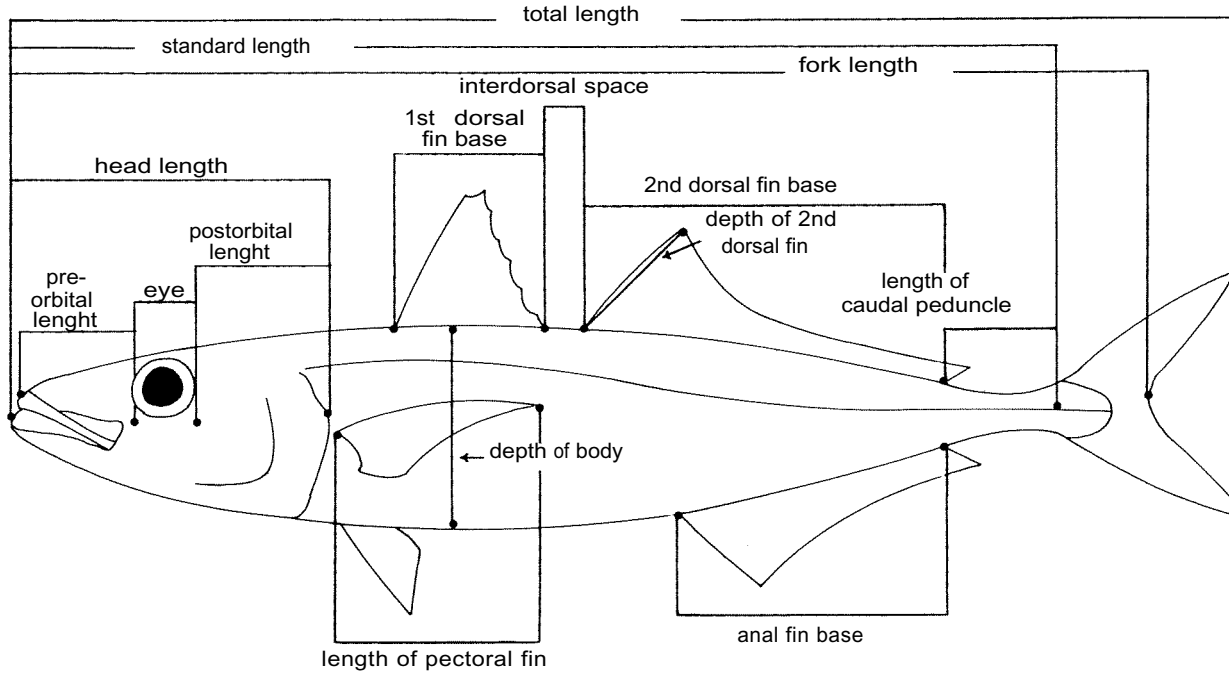
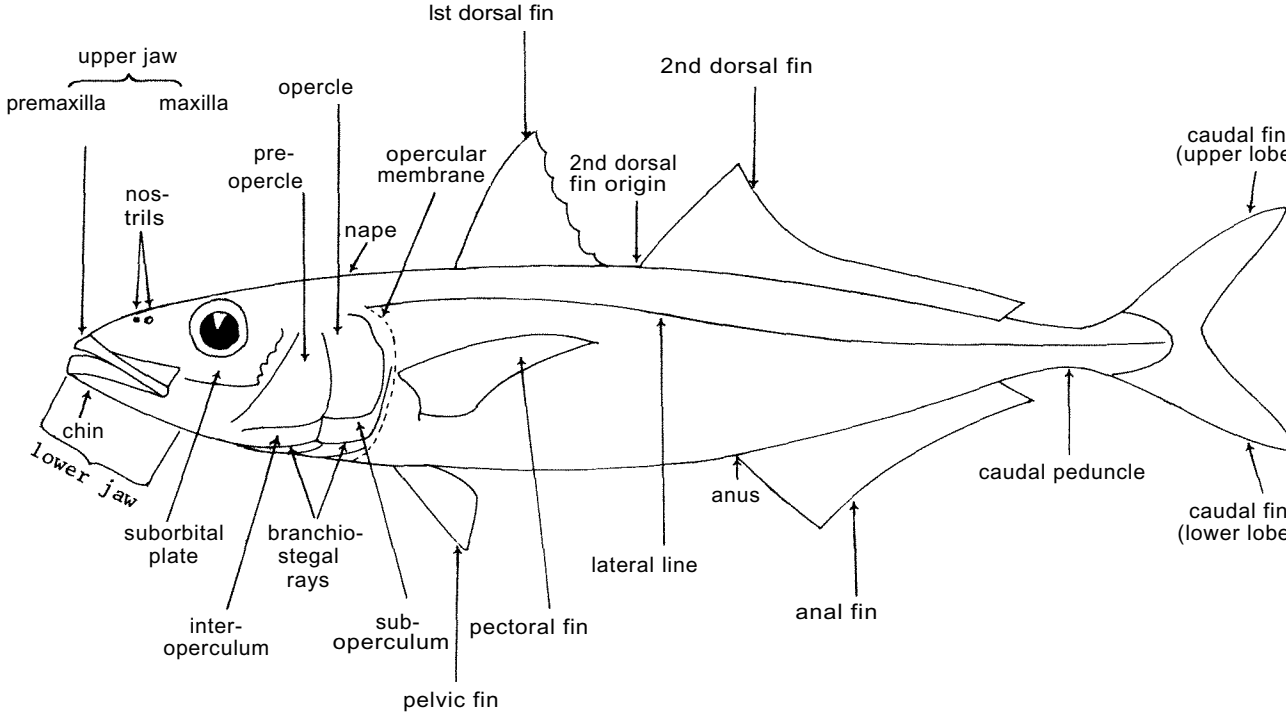
TECHNICAL TERMS

Principal Measurements Used

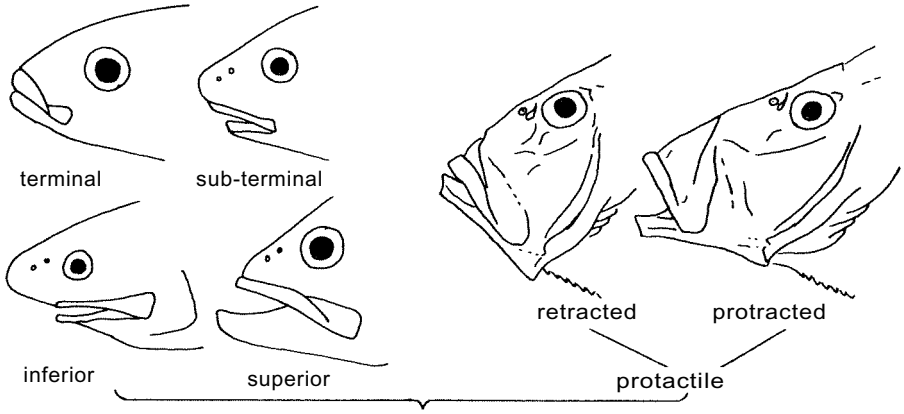
(shortest distance between the points marked: •)



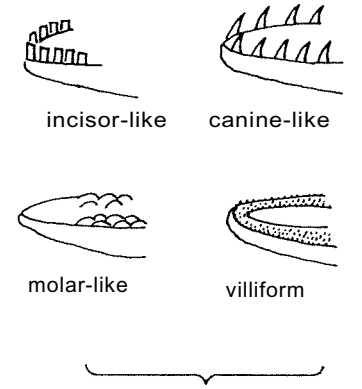
General Nomenclature of the External Morphology



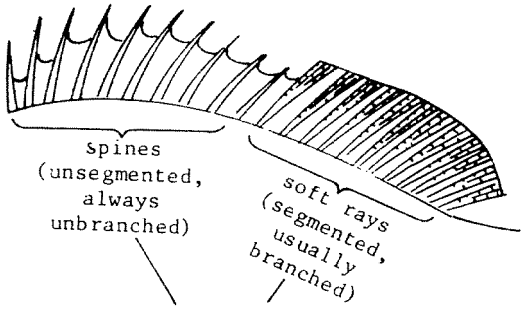
Details
(all schematic examples)



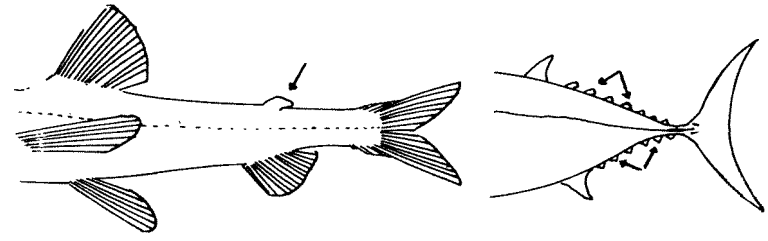
types of mouth



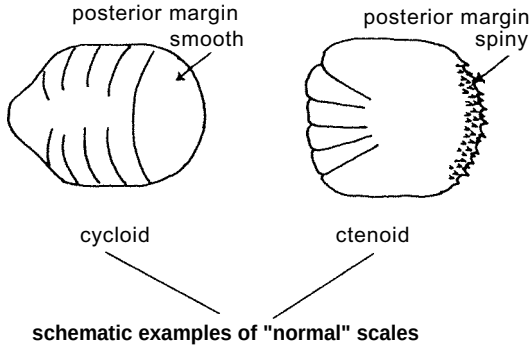
most common types of teeth



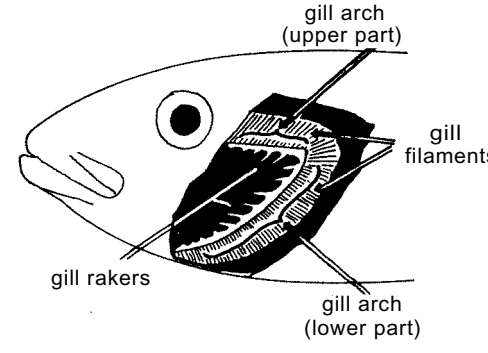
example of a continuous dorsal fin of a spiny-rayed fish



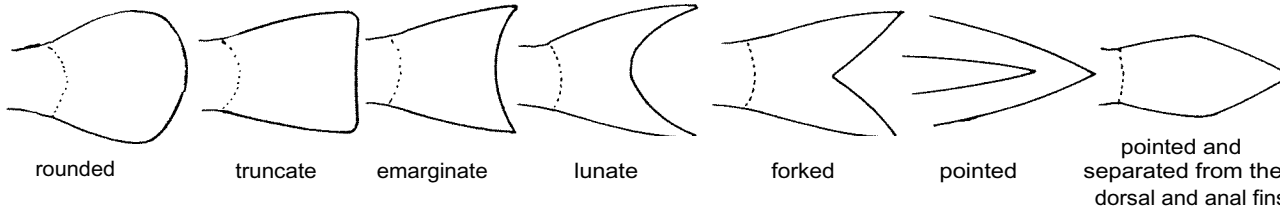
adipose fin **finlets**



schematic examples of "normal" scales



first left gill arch



most common types of caudal fin

GENERAL REMARKS

This is the largest class of living fishes. Although it encompasses a very wide range of shapes and other morphological features, all of its representatives are easily distinguished from sharks and batoid fishes by the presence of a single gill opening on each side, often overlain by a complex of bones forming a gill cover. In addition, bony fishes usually have the skin covered by overlapping scales, but these may be reduced or even absent in some families, or modified by calcification into ossified plates in others. Unlike most sharks, the caudal fin of bony fishes is most often externally symmetrical (although strongly asymmetrical in its bony structure).

Like most other tropical and subtropical areas, the Western Indian Ocean is very rich in bony fish species, few of which are individually capable of sustaining large-scale fisheries. Probably as a result of this situation, and also because of difficulties in identification of species within some of the larger families, fishery statistics are mostly reported by groups of species rather than by individual species.

Total landings of bony fishes reported for Fishing Area 51 have been rather stable over the last 10 years, amounting to about 1 670 000 metric tons in 1981. The groups dominating the current landings are clupeoids (almost half a million metric tons, mainly Sardinella species); scombroids (about 240 000 metric tons, mainly Katsuwonus pelamis, Thunnus albacares, T. obesus, Scomberomorus species, and Rastrelliger species); demersal and pelagic percomorphs more than 150 000 metric tons); bombay duck Harpadon nehereus, about 100 000 metric tons); sea catfishes or ariids (about 50 000 metric tons); jacks and scads or carangids about 50 000 metric tons); cutlass fishes or trichiurids (about 35 000 metric tons); mullets or mugilids (about 11 000 metric tons); slipmouths or leiognathids (about 11 000 metric tons); porgies and seabreams or sparids, and flatfishes (about 10 000 metric tons each), and croakers or sciaenids (more than 110 000 metric tons).

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