

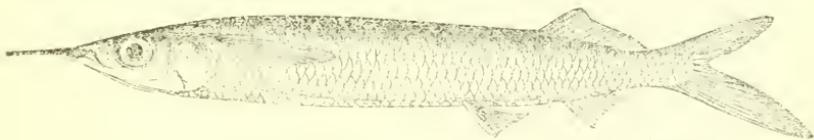
ON A RARE SPECIES OF HALF-BEAK, HEMIRAMPHUS
BALAO, FROM CUBA.

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In a small collection of fishes sent from Habana, Cuba, by Dr. John Mez is a specimen of a rare and imperfectly known Half-beak, *Hemiramphus balao* Le Sueur.

This specimen may be briefly described as follows: Head (without lower jaw), $4\frac{2}{3}$ in length from tip of snout to base of caudal; depth, $6\frac{3}{5}$; eye, 4 in head; snout, $3\frac{2}{5}$; D. 13; A. 11; scales, 59.

Body moderately robust, compressed. Lower jaw (broken) from tip to tip of upper but probably about $5\frac{1}{2}$ in distance from its tip to base of caudal. Ventrals inserted at a point midway between middle of base of caudal and the first third of length of pectoral; dorsal, and



HEMIRAMPHUS BALAO.

anal with some scales; anal fin about two-third length of dorsal, beginning behind it and ending before; last ray of dorsal and anal very slightly produced; dorsal inserted just before vent. Pectoral long, a trifle shorter than head, its length $1\frac{1}{3}$ times depth of body; ventrals $2\frac{4}{5}$ in head. Caudal deeply forked, its lower lobe longest, as long as head.

Color in spirits olivaceous, the sides silvery, without lateral band, base of pectoral dusky, upper lobe of caudal dull bluish, with no trace of orange on dorsal or caudal.

Specimens examined, $10\frac{1}{2}$ inches in length.

This species is evidently different from the common "*Escribano*" of the West Indies, *Hemiramphus brasiliensis* (Linnaeus); (*Hemiramphus browni* and *pléei* Cuvier and Valenciennes; *Hemiramphus*

marginatus Lacépède and Le Sueur; *Hemiramphus filamentosus* Poey.) It has the pectorals longer than in that species, the body rather more slender, the scales smaller,¹ the last ray of dorsal and anal less produced, while it lacks the deep orange shades on dorsal and caudal so conspicuous in the *Escribano*.

I think that Jordan and Evermann² were quite right in identifying this fish with *Hemiramphus balao* of Le Sueur, from Guadeloupe, Martinique, and Santo Domingo.

Le Sueur's fish is said to have the anal fin half as long as the dorsal, the rays being, as in the other, D. 14, A. 12 (the last, split ray in each being counted as two). According to Le Sueur, the caudal is bluish, and the pectoral a third shorter than the lower mandible, but longer than in *H. marginatus (brasiliensis)*, all the fins being longer than in the latter species and the body more slender. *Hemiramphus macrochirus* Poey, from Habana, is clearly identical with *Hemiramphus balao*. The synonymy of these species, as given by Jordan and Evermann, seems to be entirely correct.

I may here note an omission in the work of Jordan and Evermann.³ The name *Tylosurus argalus* (Le Sueur) should replace *Tylosurus ardeolus* (Cuvier and Valenciennes) if the species in question is valid. Le Sueur's *Belone argalus* was originally described in the *Journal of the Academy of Natural Sciences of Philadelphia* (vol. 2, p. 125, 1823).

¹ The statement of Valenciennes that the scales in his *Hemiramphus browni* are 65 is an error. I counted 52 in his types in the museum at Paris. (Martinique, Plée.)

² Fishes of North and Middle America, vol. 1, p. 23, 1896.

³ Fishes of North and Middle America, vol. 1, p. 713.