

LXXXI.—On a British Specimen of the Great Sea-Perch  
*Epinephelus cernioides*, Capello. By G. A. BOULENGER,  
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THE identification of the huge sea-perches of the genus *Epinephelus* which have, at rare intervals, been captured on the coast of Cornwall has been a matter of difficulty, as the specimens on which the records are based do not appear to have been preserved. Yarrell, Couch, and Day have confounded several quite distinct fishes in their synonymies of "*Serranus gigas*." Yarrell's figure certainly represents an *Epinephelus gigas*, but it was not taken from a British example, whilst Couch's coloured plate, though incorrect, clearly represents an adult *Epinephelus æneus*; so does Day's plate, taken from a young specimen received from the Berlin Museum. Probably examples of two or three different species of the large *Epinephelus* of the Mediterranean and neighbouring parts of the Atlantic have occasionally wandered to our south-western coast, but *E. æneus* is the only one which, through Couch's description and figure, may be regarded as properly identified.

Thanks to the generosity of the Directors of Harrods Stores, the British Museum has received, in fresh condition, a very fine sea-perch measuring 4 ft. 2 in. and weighing 70 lbs., which has been caught in the middle of May off Looe in Cornwall. It is proved to belong to a species, hitherto unrepresented in the National Collection, which was described and figured by Brito Capello in 1867 as *Serranus cernioides*, from the coast of Portugal. Although placed by Day in the synonymy of *Serranus gigas*, this species differs from it, as well as from *E. æneus*, in several important characters. The teeth, which Capello described, somewhat vaguely, as in broad bands, differ from those of *E. gigas* in being in two series on the sides of the lower jaw, as in *E. æneus*. Whilst in the smaller scales, all ctenoid, and covering nearly the whole maxillary, and in the ridge-like base of the three opercular spines, this species differs from the latter and bears some resemblance to *Polyprion americanus* or *cernium*, whence the name *cernioides* chosen by Capello.

The following description is drawn up from the Looe specimen:—

Teeth in villiform bands in the upper jaw and in front of the lower, with an outer series of larger conical teeth, similar to those on the sides of the lower jaw, where they form two



series only; a rather small canine tooth on each side, in front of each jaw. Depth of body nearly equal to length of head, one third total length. Snout once and two thirds diameter of eye, which is six and a half times in length of head and once and two thirds in interorbital width; lower jaw projecting; maxillary extending to below the posterior border of the eye, the width of its distal extremity nearly equalling the diameter of the eye; præoperculum slightly produced at the angle, which is armed with feebly enlarged serræ; suboperculum and interoperculum serrated; opercular spines strong, proceeding from three distinct ridges, middle spine nearer lower than upper, lower a little further back than upper; opercular flap acutely pointed; head covered with ctenoid scales, including the maxillary. 14 gill-rakers on lower part of anterior arch, the longest half the diameter of the eye. Dorsal XI 14, originating above base of pectoral; third spine longest, one third length of head, a little shorter than longest soft rays. Anal III 8; second and third spines equal, one fourth length of head, half length of soft rays. Pectoral a little more than half length of head. Ventral shorter, widely separated from vent. Caudal rounded. Scales  $145\frac{20}{60}$ , all with strongly denticulate edge; lateral line 95. Pinkish brown, without any markings, except a very indistinct dark streak from the eye to the angle of the præoperculum; fins dark purplish brown at the base, blackish at the end, the tips of the pectoral, ~~ventral~~ <sup>dorsal</sup>, ~~caudal~~ <sup>anal</sup> fins white. Iris pale golden.

Measurements:—

	mm.
Total length .....	1260
Greatest depth of body.....	350
Length of head .....	380
Width of head .....	210
Diameter of eye.....	52
Interorbital width .....	85
Third dorsal spine.....	120
Eleventh dorsal spine .....	75
Longest soft ray of dorsal .....	150
Third anal spine .....	70
Longest soft ray of anal .....	140
Length of pectoral.....	200
„ ventral .....	160
„ caudal .....	190

The specimen agrees very closely with Capello's figure, and there cannot be the least doubt as to the correctness of its identification.



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