

## Shortfin Squid, *Illex illecebrosus*, Attacks on Trawl-Captured Fish

SALVATORE A. TESTAVERDE

During the months July through November 1976, Gloucester, Mass., draggersmen reported (pers. commun.) increasingly large catches of shortfin squid, *Illex illecebrosus*, from the Gulf of Maine and Massachusetts Bay to Georges Bank.

In a normal year, catch rates per 2-hour tow average about 25-35 kg; in 1976 the average catch per tow ranged from 400 to 500 kg with reports of some catches exceeding 5,000 kg.

### CATCHES

Fishermen also reported that commercial size catches of fish were not usually taken when large concentrations of shortfin squid were captured. Furthermore, hauls that included mixtures of shortfin squid and fish were found to contain fish damaged by squid bites (Fig. 1). Those fish were rendered unsalable.

The majority of squid bites were located on the mid-body region, between the pectoral fins and the anus. Wounds ranged from 2 to 4 cm in diameter. In some cases, two or more wounds were found adjacent to each other, although it is not known if they were caused by the same squid. No squids were bitten.

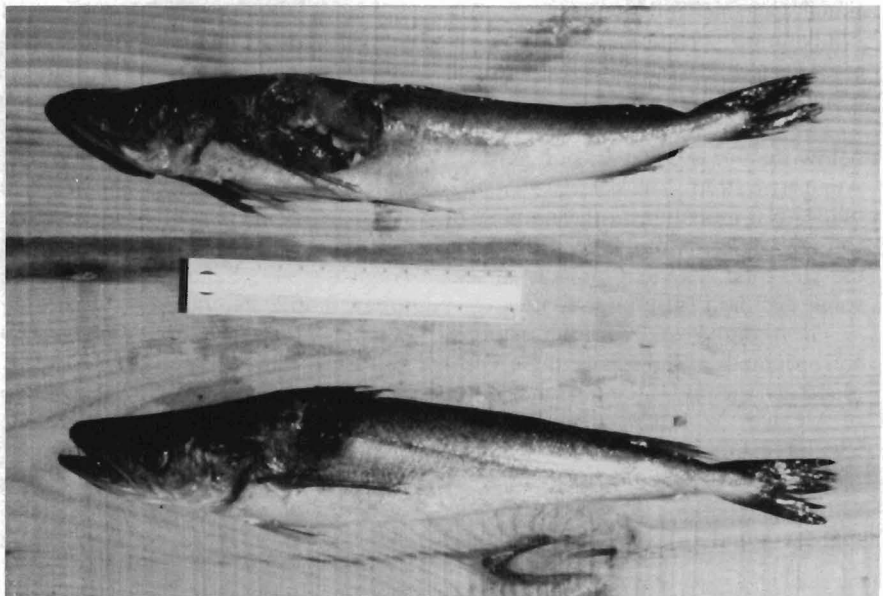


Figure 1.—Silver hake, *Merluccius bilinearis*, with wounds inflicted by shortfin squid, *Illex illecebrosus*.

Sizes of squid were reported to range from 20 to 30 cm, mantle length.

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*Salvatore A. Testaverde is Gloucester Fisheries Commissioner, 10 Riggs Street, Gloucester, MA 01930.*

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