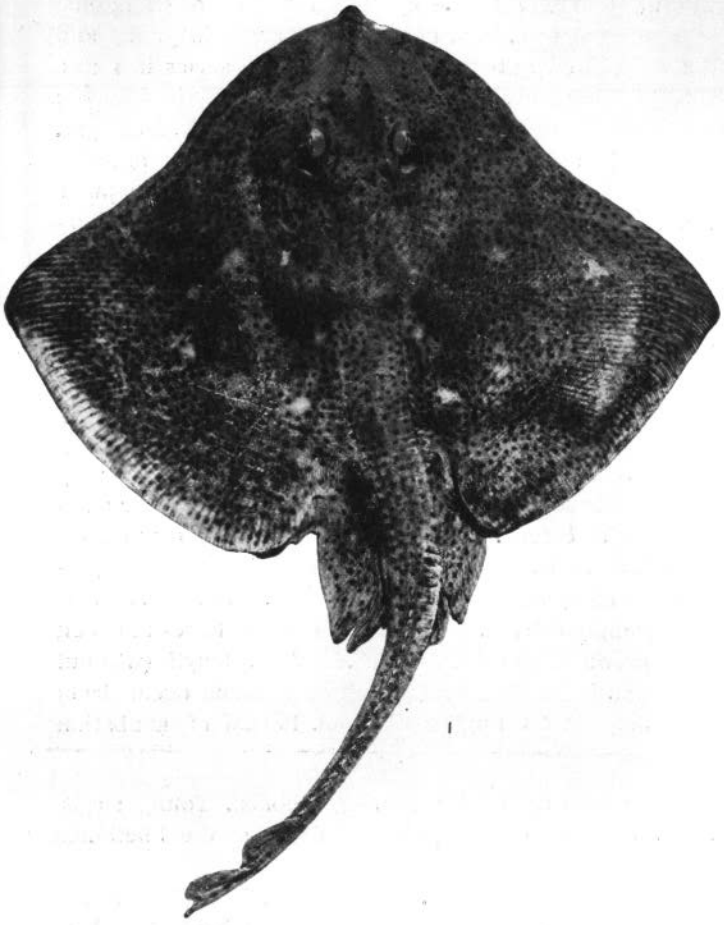
SELACHII

Hypotremata Raiidæ

Raia brachyura

LAFONT 1930



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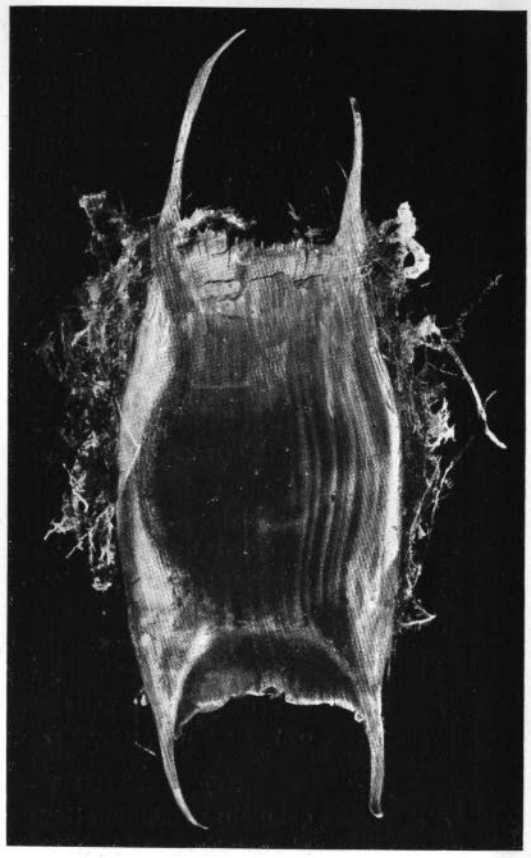

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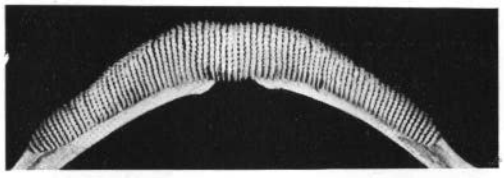

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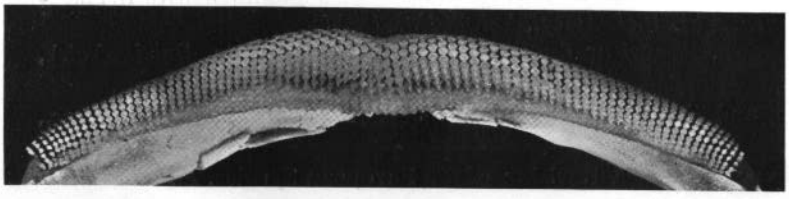

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EXPLANATION OF FIGURES

Fg. 1. Immature male from Flugga, Shetland. Width of disc 667 mm.

Fg. 2. Egg capsule. Length (without horns), 121 mm. Greatest breadth, 79 mm.

Fg. 3. Teeth of adult male.

Fg. 4. Teeth of adult female.

Raia brachyura LAFONT 1930

DIAGNOSIS — Maximal length 1130 and width 760 mm. *Disc.* - length about one-half and width about two-thirds of total length of fish; anterior margin more broadly undulated than in *R. Montagui.* Snout projects as a short rounded or obtusely pointed process, its length 5 to 5.8 times in width of disc and 2.3 to 3 times the interorbital width which is greater than the longitudinal diameter of the eye and less than or (in adults) equal to the combined length of eye and spiracle. Vent nearer tip of snout in young and end of tail in adults. *Teeth* small and pointed in both sexes, the middle series in males with longer conical points and with the side rows flat and wedge-shaped as in females; 60 to 90 rows in upper jaw. Individual teeth relatively smaller than those of *R. Montagui. Upper surface* - disc entirely spinulose in adults, smooth in young, except for anterior margin. Orbital spines present in young, but small or absent in adults. A pair of scapular spines in young, but wanting in adults. As many as 7 median nuchal spines in adult females. A complete series of median spines in young, restricted to the tail in adult males or reduced in number on the body in adult females. Usually one or two spines between the dorsals. Lateral series on the tail prominent in young, absent in adult males and incompletely represented in adult females. Adult males with three rows of alar spines and a patch of strong malar spines. Caudal minute. Colour light fawn to brown with numerous small black spots and a few larger cream-coloured spots, the latter blending imperceptibly with the ground colour. Dark spots usually extending to the margin of the disc and usually relatively smaller and more numerous than in *R. Montagui. Lower surface* - snout strongly spinulose or with praenasal area smooth in adult females except for spinulæ on the anterior margin. A narrow border of spinulæ extend along anterior margin of disc almost half-way to the outer angle. Disc otherwise smooth, except occasionally for rough patches on the chin, abdominal region and along the tail in adults. Colour white. *Egg. capsule* large; one side almost flat, the other strongly convex. A thick mass of loose fibres attached to the more convex side. Long horns produced and filamentous. Range in length (without horns) 115 to 143 mm. and 72 to 90 mm. in greatest breadth. Ripe females occur from February to August (chiefly April to July) in the English Channel. Period of incubation of the embryo about seven months.

DISTRIBUTION — Shallow to moderate depths (ca. 60 fathoms). Young stages occur in water less than 10 fms. Atlantic coast of Europe as far north as the Shetlands and southwards to Madeira.

Mediterranean (Rey); common in the English Channel. Enters the south-western North Sea (Holt). West Coasts of Ireland and Scotland. Penetrates the Northern North Sea. Unknown in Scandinavian waters.

COMMON NAMES — British, Blonde; French, Raie blanche ou lisse.

SYNONYMY

R. asterias Günther (non. syn.) 1870.
R. blanda Holt and Calderwood 1895.
R. asterias Le Danois (non. syn.) 1913.

LITERATURE

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1893. — Holt, E.W.L. The blonde (*R. blanda*), a species hitherto confounded with *R. maculata* Mont. *Journ. Mar. Biol. Assoc., Vol. 3. N.S. 1893-5.*

1895. — Holt & Calderwood. Report on the Rarer Fishes *Trans. Roy. Soc., Dublin, Vol. V, ser. 2, IX.*

1922. — Clark, R.S. Rays and Skates. Egg Capsules and Young. *Journ. Mar. Biol. Assoc., XII, N° 4.*

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Paris. — Impressions Blondel La Rougery — 3 8 8 1 - 1 - 30