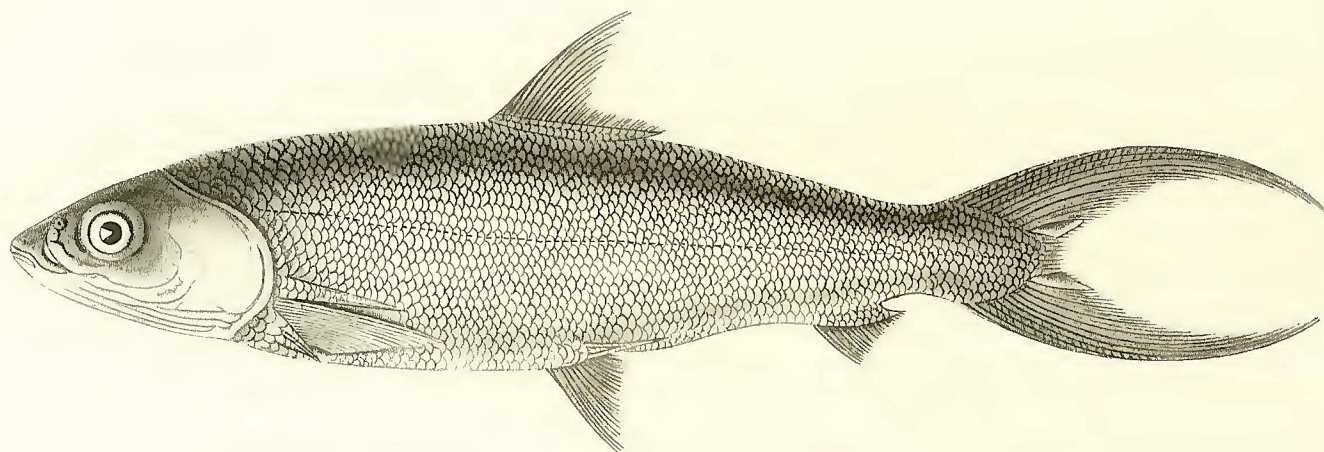


Order GONORYNCHIFORMES

Milkfishes

Family **CHANIDAE**<sup>1</sup>

Günther 1868



Probably first-published *accurate* image of *Chanos chanos* (as *C. lubina*, a junior synonym). From: Cuvier, G. and A. Valenciennes. 1847. Histoire naturelle des poissons. Tome dix-neuvième. Suite du livre dix-neuvième. Brochets ou Lucioïdes. Livre vingtième. De quelques familles de Malacoptérygiens, intermédiaires entre les Brochets et les Clupes. P. Bertrand, Paris. v. 19: i–xix + 1–544 + 6 pp., Pls. 554–590. [Note: In 1803, Russell (Descriptions and figures of two hundred fishes: collected at Vizagapatam on the coast of Coromandel) published two images (*palah-bontah* and *tooleloo*) of fishes believed to be *Chanos chanos*; since they are anatomically inaccurate (e.g., wrong shape of caudal fin), neither one is reproduced here.]

**Chanos**

Lacepède 1803

tautonymous with *Mugil chanos* Fabricius 1775 (which  
Lacepède unnecessarily renamed as *Chanos arabicus*)

**Chanos chanos** (Fabricius 1775) possibly derived from *chani*, a Turkish name mentioned by Forsskål for variety “b” of a fish (possibly a serranid from the Mediterranean) that Fabricius applied to variety “a” (this milkfish, described from the Red Sea)<sup>2</sup> [authorship often given as (Forsskål 1775)]

<sup>1</sup> One Recent species with several Early Cretaceous genera. The meaning of the common name “milkfish” is not clear. Russell (Descriptions and figures of two hundred fishes: collected at Vizagapatam on the coast of Coromandel, 1803) reported that English residents in India, where the fish was considered excellent table fare, called it the “milk mullet.” The “milk” part of the name may refer to the whiteness and delicacy of its flesh.

<sup>2</sup> Jordan & Evermann (Fishes of North and Middle America, vol. 1, 1896) state that *Chanos* is from χύνος (*chynos*), a “name in modern Greek,” derived from χάνος (*chános*), “the open mouth,” a word sometimes applied to fishes with especially wide gapes (e.g., *Channomuraena*, *Channichthys*). This claim, which has been repeated in many references, is easily discounted by the fact that *Chanos chanos* has a “small” mouth (to use Jordan & Evermann’s descriptor), and the inclusion of the Turkish name *chani* in its original description. Interestingly, Jordan & Evermann included *chani* in their list of vernacular names for the species but apparently failed to see its etymological significance.