Order ELOPIFORMES

Tenpounders and Ladyfishes

Family ELOPIDAE

Valenciennes 1847

Elops

Linnaeus 1766

élops (ἔλλοψ), a Greek word (often spelled helops) variously defined as meaning dumb, scaly, a fish (in general), and a large, rare and precious fish compared to or identified as a sturgeon; the application to this genus remains obscure, but considering that Linnaeus named E. saurus based in part on a 1725 description ("all over scaly") of what appears to be a lizardfish (Synodus), maybe the “scaly” explanation is the best fit.

Elops affinis Regan 1909

Latin for related, described as “extremely similar” to E. saurus (18–20 gill rakers on lower part of anterior arch vs. 12–15)

Elops hawaiensis Regan 1909

-ensis, Latin suffix denoting place: Hawaiian Islands, type locality

Elops lacerta Valenciennes 1847

Latin equivalent of the Greek saúra (σαύρα), lizard, alluding to the name of E. saurus

Elops machnata (Fabricius 1775)

Latinization of machnat, Arabic vernacular for this species [authorship often given as (Forsskål 1775)]

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Elops saurus Linnaeus 1766

from saúra (Gr. οὐρα), lizard, based on Saurus maximus, non maculatus of Sloane 1725, most likely a lizardfish (Synodus), which Linnaeus incorrectly cited instead of the “pounder” described and illustrated in the same book [see illustrations above and below]

Elops senegalensis Regan 1909

-ensis, Latin suffix denoting place: St. Louis, Senegal, type locality

Elops smithi McBride, Rocha, Ruiz-Carus & Bowen 2010

in honor of American ichthyologist David G. Smith, National Museum of Natural History, Smithsonian Institution (Washington, D.C.), “for his thoroughness in examining leptocephali of Elops to reveal that two morphs were present”

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The illustration, presumably of a lizardfish (Synodus), upon which Linnaeus mistakenly based, in part, his description and naming of Elops saurus. This image (Tab. 251), appeared on the page after “The Pounder” (Tab. 250, shown above). The common name “Sea Galliwasp” alludes to the Jamaica Giant Galliwasp Celestus occiduus, a lizard endemic to Jamaica.