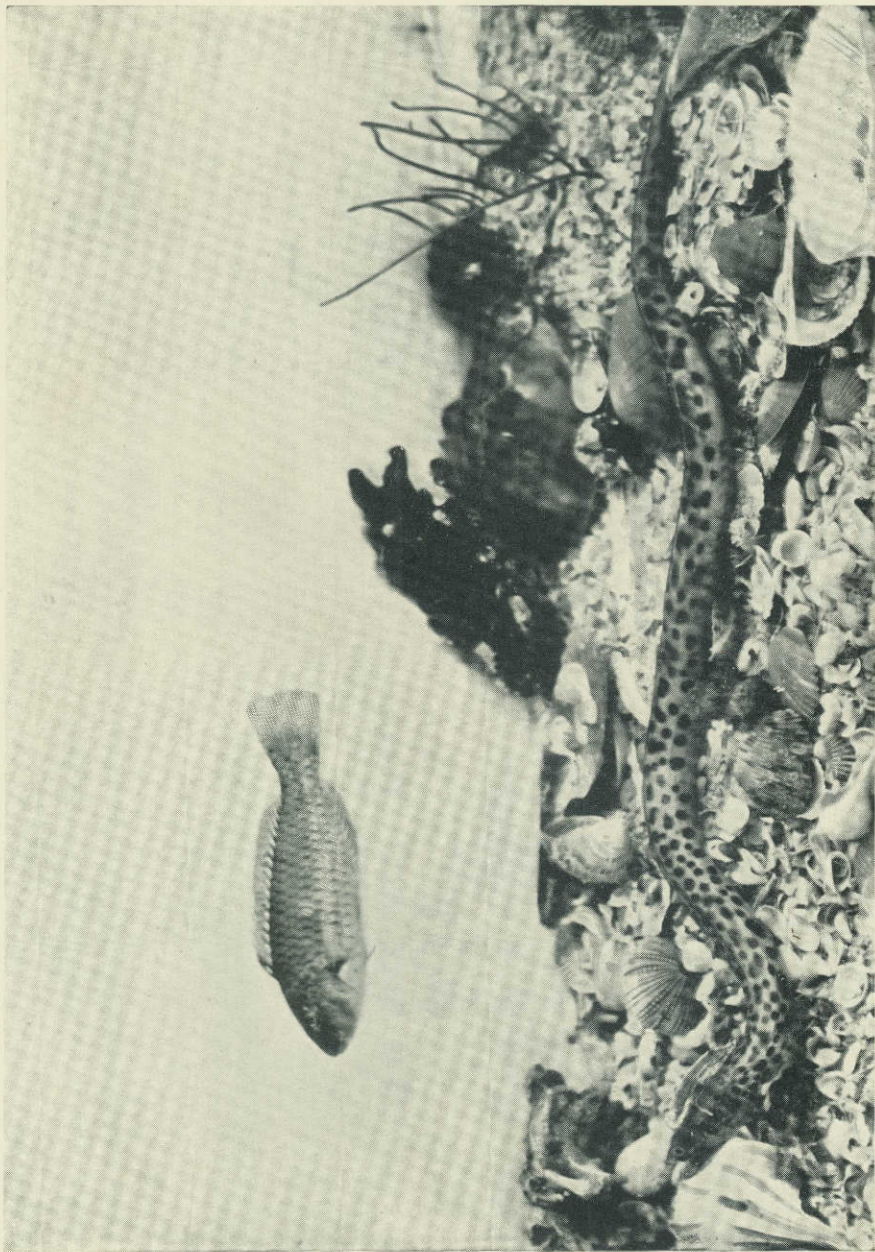


CHAPTER XI

Spotted Eels, Crab Eaters, Surf Whiting, Moon
Fish, Leather Jackets, Trigger Fish, and Mullet.



A CURIOUS SNAKE-LIKE EEL, WITHOUT SLIME, USUALLY FOUND STRANDED AFTER A STORM.

CHAPTER XI

SPOTTED EELS, CRAB EATERS, SURF WHITING, MOON FISH,
LEATHER JACKETS, TRIGGER FISH, AND MULLET

SPOTTED EEL (*Mystriophys intertinctus*)

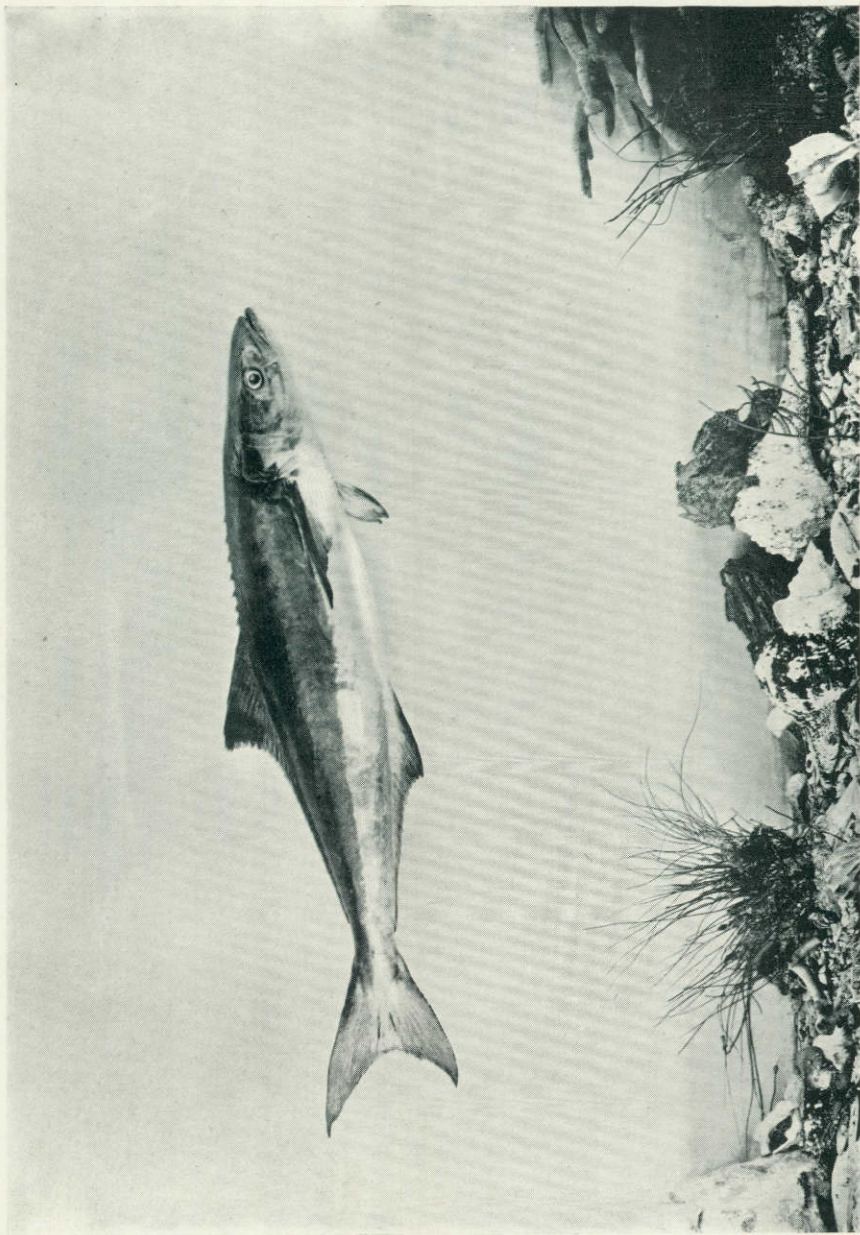
THERE is something peculiarly snakelike about these yellow, black-spotted eels, which are only found washed ashore after storms from a certain quarter, and never, at any rate to my knowledge, take a baited hook. There are many of these spotted eels in the waters round Florida Keys, and one of them is known as the "sea-serpent."

The small upper fish in the photograph is evidently a wrass of some kind, probably a rock-cook (*Centrolabrus*), but as]no one catches the wrass, save by accident, I never studied them.

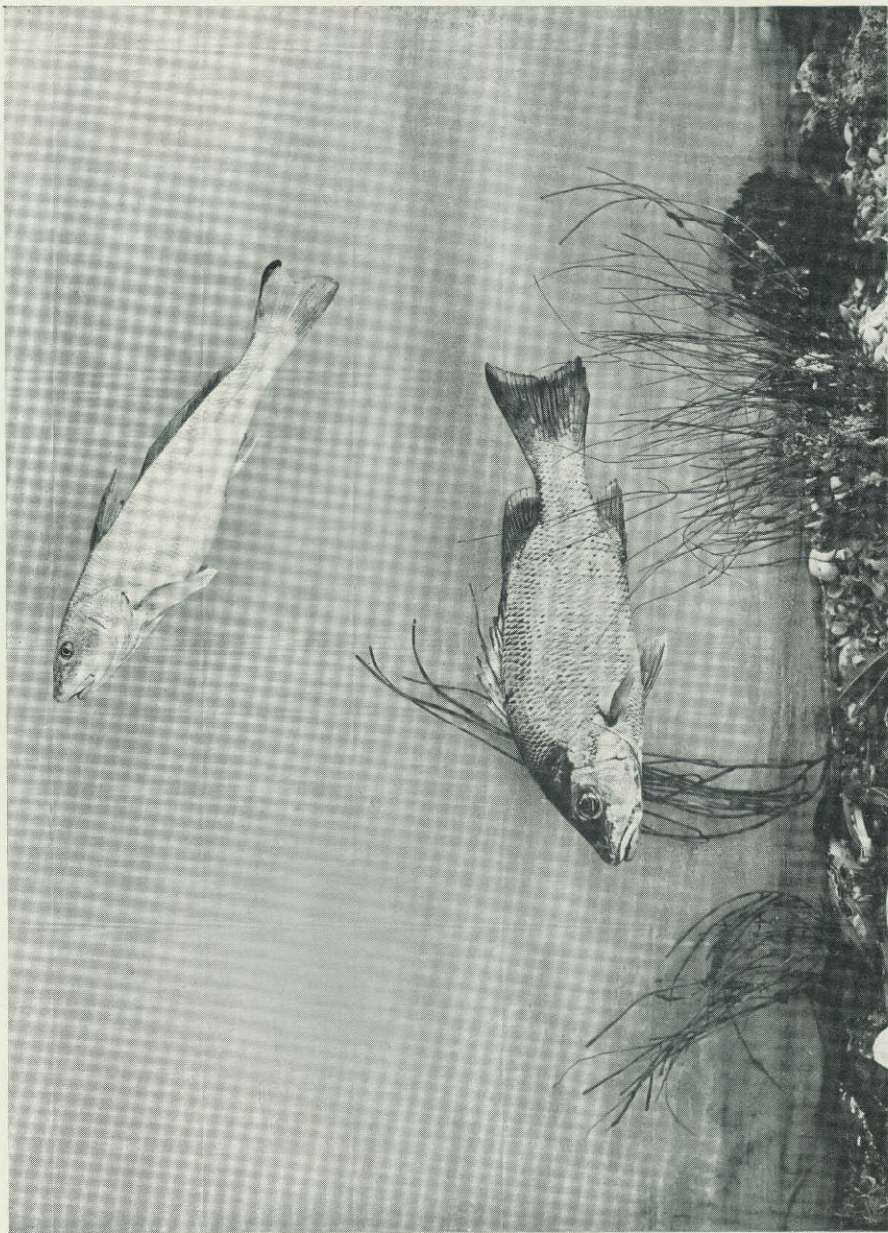
Giant Fish of Florida

COBIA OR CRAB EATER (*Rachycentron canadus*)

This handsome and sporting fish is allied to the mackerel, and in some parts, indeed, goes by the name of "bonito," though the true bonito is more closely related to the tunny. Its specific name is a good instance of the singular inappropriateness of some such titles, for it does not occur in Canada. The cobia grows to a length of four or five feet, and is a dashing fish when hooked, though it is not very common in the angler's catch.



THE COBIA. A STRONG AND DASHING FISH.



THE UPPER FISH IS A SURF WHITING, THE LOWER A MANGO SNAPPER.

Giant Fish of Florida

SURF WHITING (*Menticirrhus littoralis*) AND MANGROVE SNAPPER (*Neomaenis spec.*)

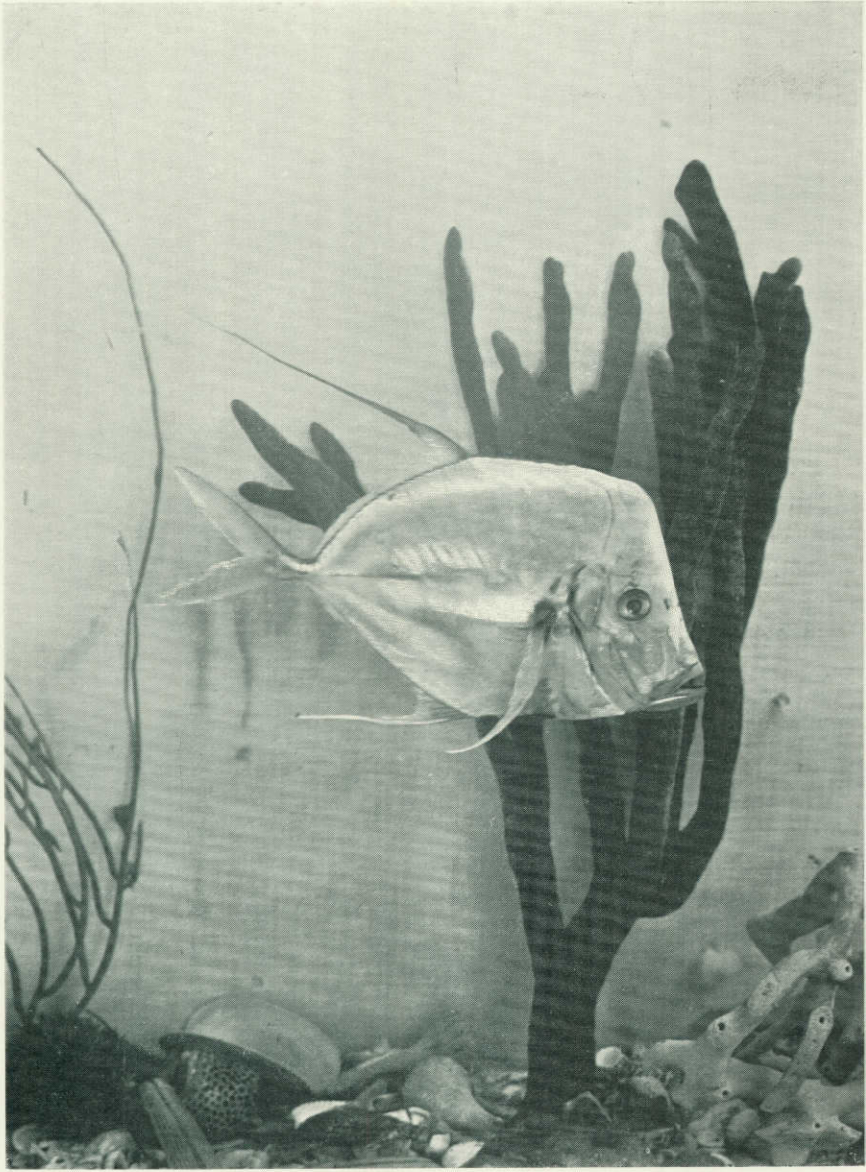
The surf whiting, as its name implies, frequents the surf, where it is caught like so many others on that coast ; it takes mullet as bait.

The snapper, which is one of a very large group, derives its distinctive name from the fact of the young, and sometimes the grown fish as well, being found feeding in the neighbourhood of the mangroves.

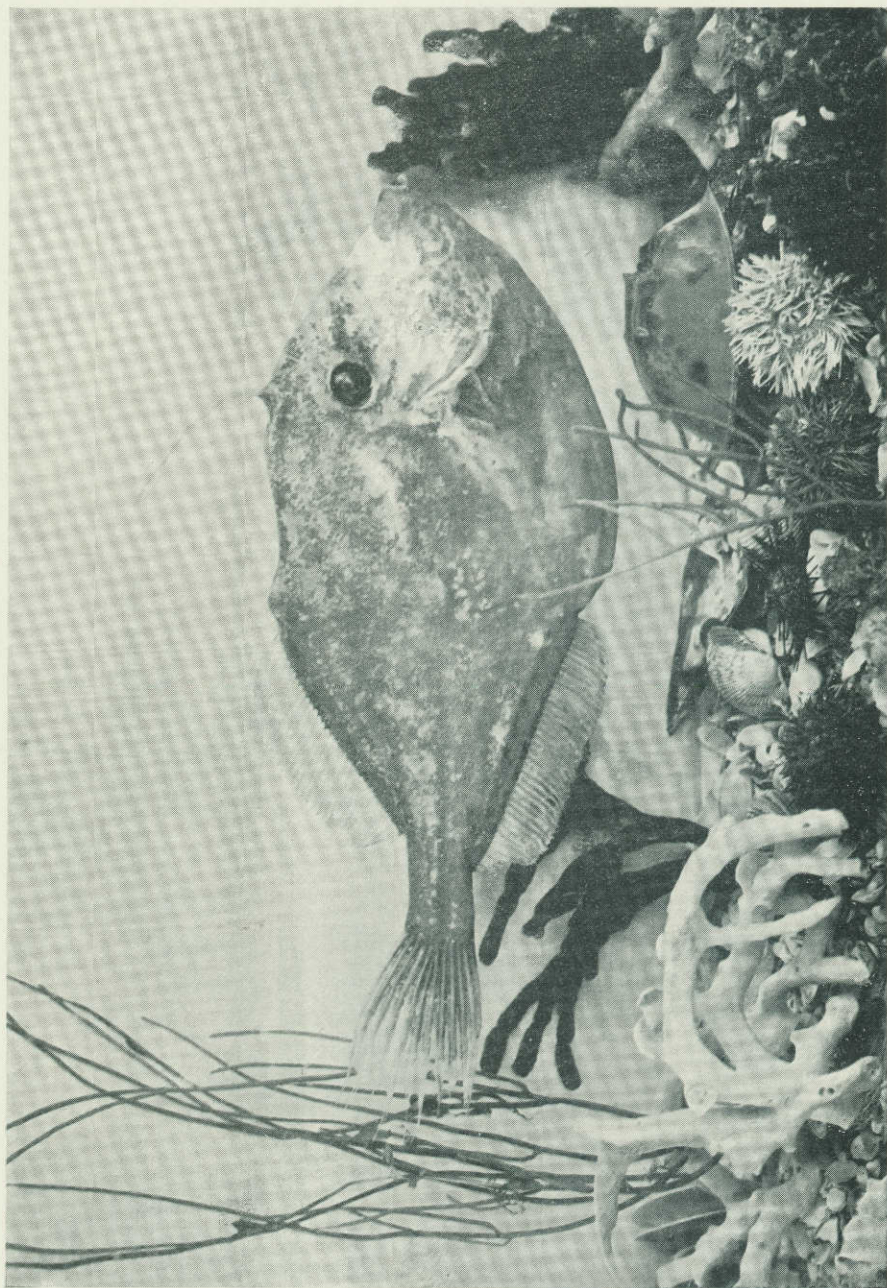
Giant Fish of Florida

SILVER MOON FISH OR LOOK DOWN (*Selene vomer*)

This eccentric-looking fish is of a beautiful mother-of-pearl tint, and the long ray of the dorsal fin shows the subject of the photograph to be a young fish, for this long growth is shed at a more mature age. The moon fish makes capital bait for tarpon and other large fish, and the wonder is, indeed, that such a species can survive at all, for it is to all appearance both defenceless and slow in its movements.



A MOON FISH.



A LEATHER JACKET, A QUAIN FISH ROUGH AS SANDPAPER, TOUGH AS LEATHER, AND AS HARD AND THIN AS A HALF-INCH BOARD.

Giant Fish of Florida

LEATHER JACKET (*Monacanthus hispidus*)

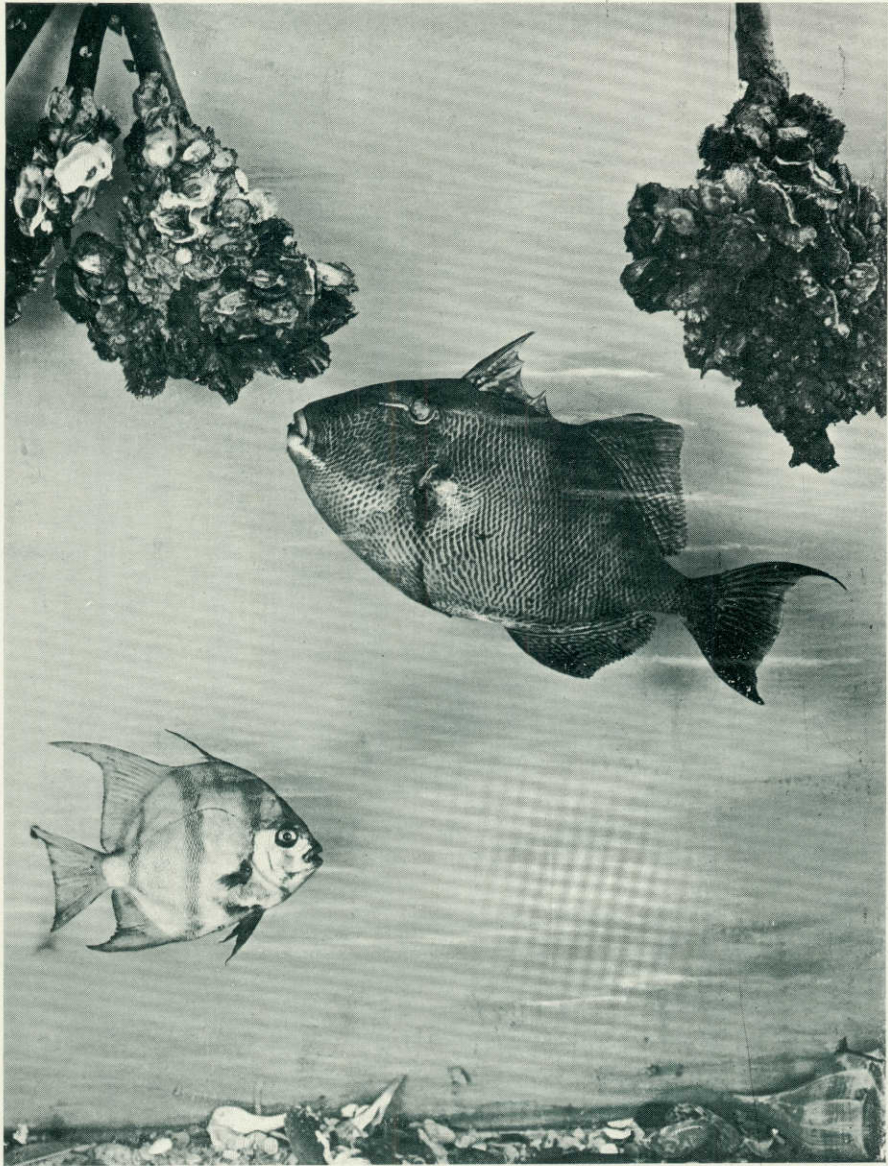
These leather jackets are found in most tropical seas, and with their large sheeplike teeth they seize any bait left stationary at the bottom. They are without true scales, the body being covered with roughnesses instead. They are thin, tough fish, and of no use for food.

Giant Fish of Florida

TRIGGER FISH (*Balistes carolinensis*) AND ANGEL FISH (*Angelichthys isabelita*)

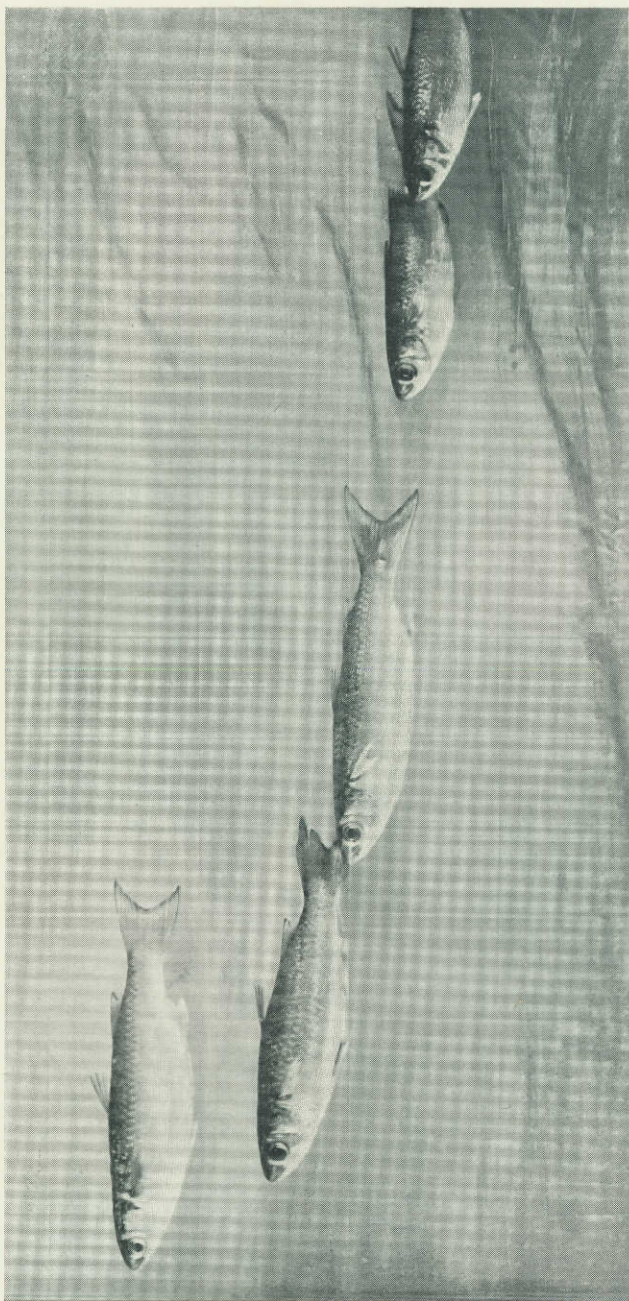
The trigger fish, like the last species figured, also goes by the name of "leather jacket," and is, as a glance at its general outline will show, a similar type of fish. The trigger fish derives the name from the curious arrangement of its dorsal fin, which lies flat in a socket or slot. It has, like the last, no true scales, but excrescences, which can be plainly seen in the photograph. It is not often taken on a hook.

The little angel fish is one of the most gaudy inhabitants of those seas, where the usual preponderance of gaily coloured fish is hardly, perhaps, so marked as in some other warm waters. It is found in shoals round wrecks and sunken piles. Blue and yellow, with reddish and brown and olive markings and spots, some varieties of the "angel" are beautiful if somewhat gorgeous fish. If well angled for they can be taken in quantities. These are among the many accidental arrivals in the tarpon fisher's boat, but I have thought it best to give as many photographs of local fish as possible, so that the visitor with a liking for natural history may not be at a loss to identify an occasional strange fish, about which he wants to write to the proper authorities for further information.



TRIGGER FISH—A LEATHERY DARK FISH WITH ROUGH DIAMOND-SHAPED EXCRESCENCES INSTEAD OF SCALES.

ANGEL FISH, A DELICATE VERY BEAUTIFUL LITTLE FISH.



SILVER MULLET, RESTLESS WANDERERS, EVER SKIMMING IN SHOALS ALONG THE COAST.

Giant Fish of Florida

SILVER MULLET (*Mugil brasiliensis*)

This is the less common of the two mullets found in those waters, and is chiefly noteworthy as being *not* the one in general use as bait. It is taken only in nets, and not often in those, as its habit is to skirt the shore, where shooting a net is attended with difficulties.

