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THE SHARK *DALATIAS LICHA* (BONNATERRE, 1788) CAUGHT ALIVE

IN THE COASTAL WATERS OF THE NETHERLANDS

(PISCES, SELACHII, DALATIIDAE)

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ABSTRACT

The capture of a live specimen of the shark *Dalati-
as licha* (Bonnaterre, 1788) is reported from the
coastal waters of the Netherlands.

On the 16th of December 1975, two Dutch trawlers
from the fishing port of Volendam, VD 19 and 73,
pair-trawling in the coastal waters off IJmuiden,
caught alive a specimen of *Dalati-
as licha* (Bonna-
terre, 1788) - often recorded as *Scymnorhinus li-
cha* - at approx. the following position: 52° 25' N
04° 20' E. The specimen was brought to the Nether-
lands Institute for Fishery Investigations (RIVO),
IJmuiden, through the attention of Mr. G. Rink,
after which it was deposited in the fish collec-
tion of the Institute of Taxonomic Zoology (Zoo-
logisch Museum) in Amsterdam (ZMA 114.067).

The specimen - an adult female (fig. 1) with-

out embryos - has a total length of 170 cm and
shows the following characteristics: subcylindri-
cal, uniformly dark coloured body; short, broadly
rounded snout with thick and fleshy lips; forward
position of the eyes. Also typical are the serrate
margins and triangular shape of its lower teeth,
which distinguishes *Dalati-
as licha* (English:
Darkie Charlie; Dutch: Zwarte Haai) from the other
North Atlantic members of the suborder Squaloidea
(Bigelow & Schroeder, 1948: 502).

Although this record is the first occurrence
of a live specimen in the coastal waters of the
Netherlands and in the North Sea, Van der Klaauw
(1921: civ-cix) describes an earlier record, viz.
a female specimen - five embryos were found in the
ovary - with a total length of 148 cm, washed
ashore at Onrust, a tidal flat West of the island

Texel, North Holland, in April 1920. Van der Klaauw's paper covers the existing literature of *Dalatias licha* up to the date of his publication.

Dalatias licha is a relatively common shark on the continental slopes of the eastern Atlantic from West-Africa in the South to the Irish Atlantic slope in the North. The species is known from the western Mediterranean, the waters round South Africa, the New Zealand-Australian region, as well as from Japanese and Chinese waters, often locally common. It is commonly found in moderately deep waters of 300-700 meters. Interesting are other captures in shallow waters: the first record in the western Atlantic - also a female, with a total length of about 150 cm - at Georges Bank at a depth of about 100 meters on the 19th of August 1937, and of again a female - with a total length of 144.5 cm - seven miles South of Eddystone lighthouse (Western Channel) on the 8th of April 1968 (Blacker, 1969: 258; Wheeler & Blacker, 1972: 144) at a depth of 71 meters. Our female specimen was captured at a depth of 20 meters. It is not clear whether our specimen entered the southern North Sea through the Channel or via the northern North Sea as known for e.g. Ray's Bream (*Brama brama* Bonnaterre, 1788) and Sunfish (*Mola mola* Linnaeus, 1758), which often wash ashore alive on the Dutch coast in November and December. An indication of a passage through the northern North

Sea is the capture in recent years of two specimens of *Dalatias licha* near the Shetland Islands. One specimen was caught near Sumburgh Head in 1967 (Rae & Pirie, 1968: 201), and a second specimen was recorded from the Muckle Flugga area in 1973 (Pirie, 1975: 208).

The record of *Dalatias licha* off IJmuiden is an addition to the "Catalogue of fish species of the Netherlands" (Nijssen & de Groot, 1974) and brings the total number of recorded fish species in the twelve miles zone along the coast of the Netherlands up to 180.

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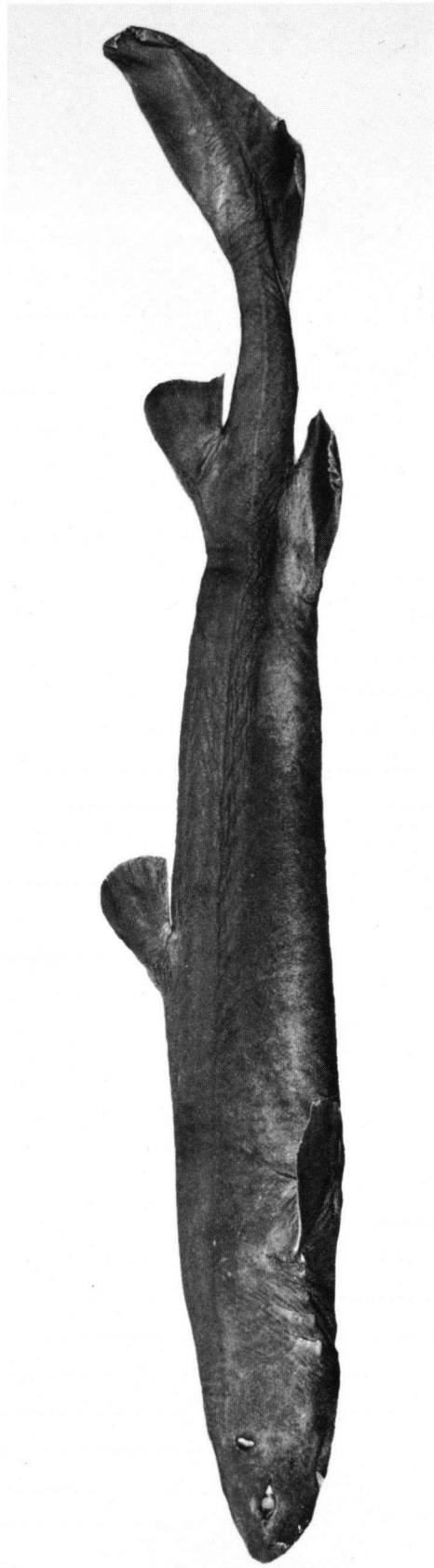


Fig. 1. *Dalatias licha*, a female of 170 cm total length, caught alive off Ljmuiden on 16-XII-1975 (ZMA 114.067).

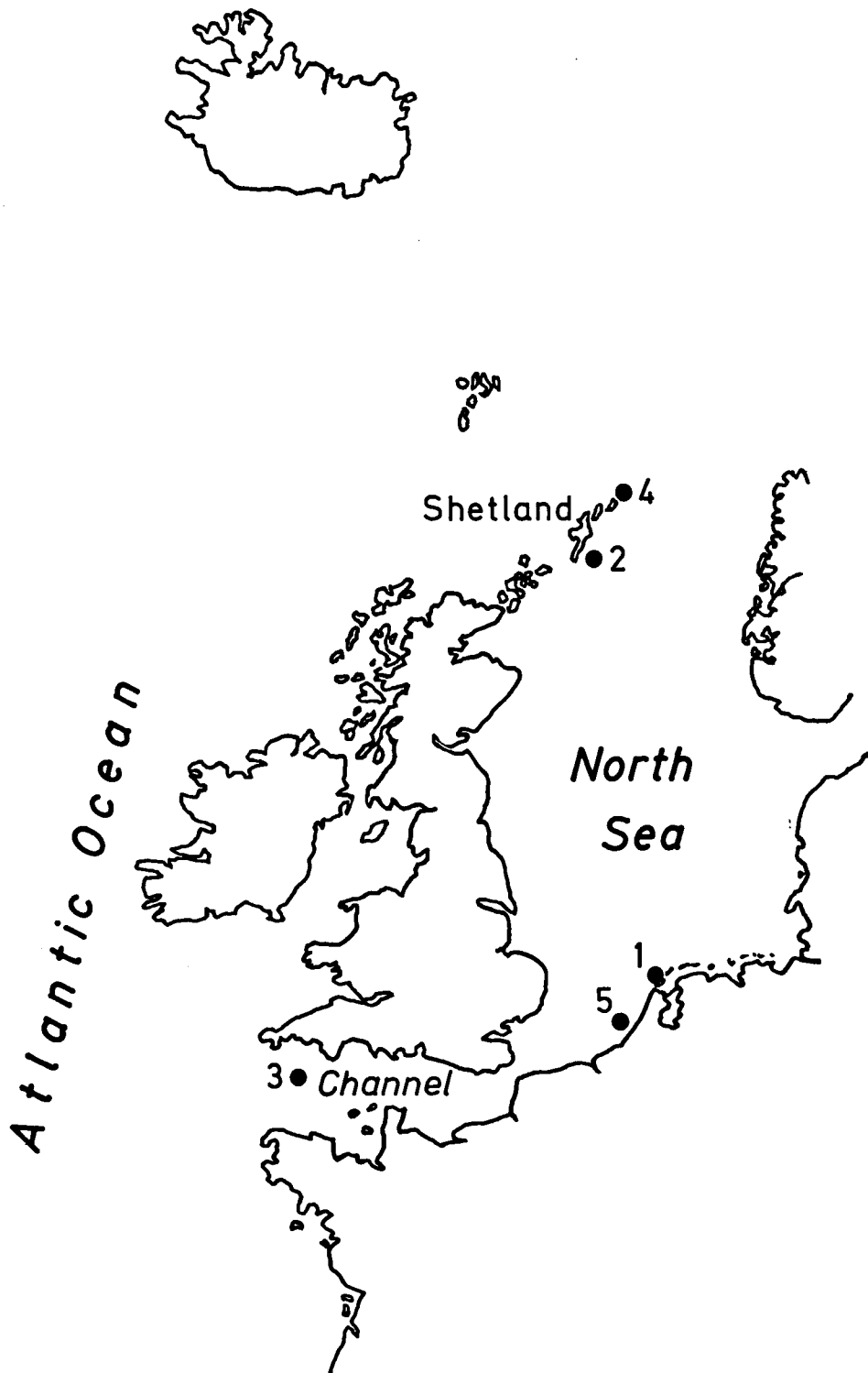


Fig. 2. Occurrence of *Dalatias licha* in North Sea and Channel: 1 - Texel, 1920 (washed ashore); 2 - Sumburgh Head, 1967; 3 - South of Eddystone, 1968; 4 - Muckle Flugga area, 1973; 5 - off IJmuiden, 1975.