

ELOPIDAE***Megalops atlanticus* Valenciennes**

Spawning: Gulf of Mexico and Yucatan Channel in spring and summer, but locations not well known.

Eggs — Undescribed.

Larvae — Leptocephalus-like with forked caudal fin, triangular head, and ribbon-like body.
 — Gut long, about 75% TL.
 — Flexion occurs at 10–11 mm SL.
 — Air bladder conspicuous after flexion.
 — Teeth prominent in early larvae (lost at metamorphosis).
 — Note relative positions of dorsal and anal fins.
 — Period of larval growth followed by shrinkage and thickening of body during metamorphosis, and then resumption of growth up to juvenile stage.
 — Fin formation: caudal fin rays form at flexion; dorsal and anal fin rays form at about 16 mm (before metamorphosis) and are complete at 17–20 mm (after metamorphosis); pectoral and pelvic fin rays develop later.
 — Maximum size before metamorphosis is about 29 mm SL.
 — Pigmentation: dorsal edge of gut, anal base, and over eye; pigment scatters with growth.

Meristic features

Myomeres: 54–57
 Vert : 33–34+22
 D : 13–16
 A : 22–25
 C : 7+10+9+6–7

ELOPIDAE***Elops saurus* Linnaeus**

Spawning: Location unknown; season prolonged.

Eggs — Undescribed.

Larvae — Leptocephalus-like with forked caudal fin, triangular head, and ribbon-like body.
 — Gut long, 80–90% TL.
 — Flexion occurs at 10–15 mm SL.
 — Note relative positions of dorsal and anal fins.
 — Period of larval growth followed by shrinkage and thickening of body during metamorphosis, and then resumption of growth up to juvenile stage.
 — Dorsal and anal counts usually complete at about 25 mm (after metamorphosis).
 — Maximum size before metamorphosis is about 43 mm.
 — Pigmentation: dorsal edge of gut, mid-lateral body, and anal base; dorsal air bladder pigmented after metamorphosis.

Meristic features

Myomeres: (72)78–80(82)
 Vert : 55–56+24
 D : 25–29
 A : 16–19
 C : 9–11+10+9+7–8

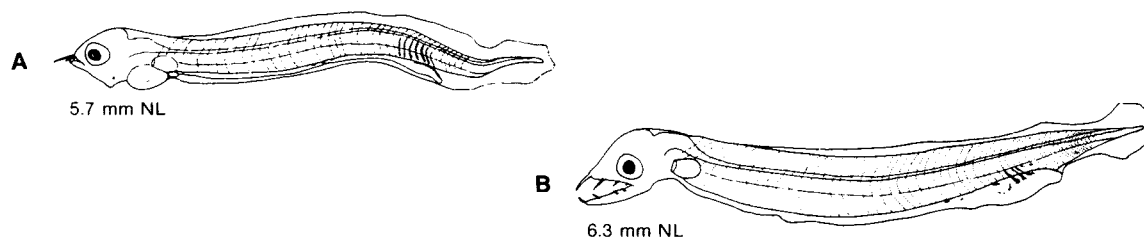
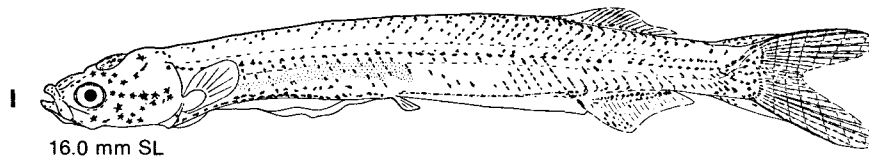
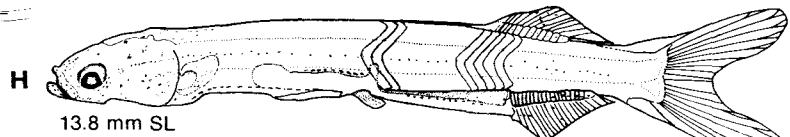
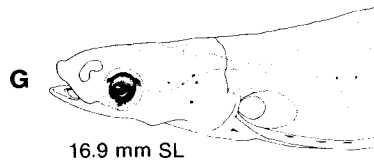
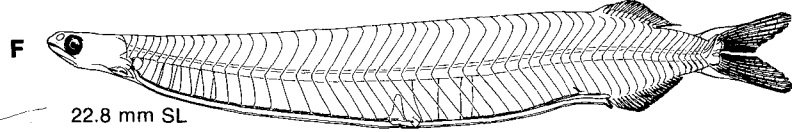
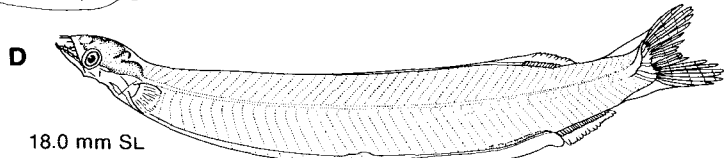
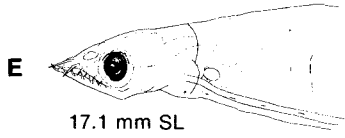
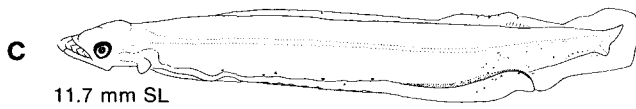
Megalops atlanticus

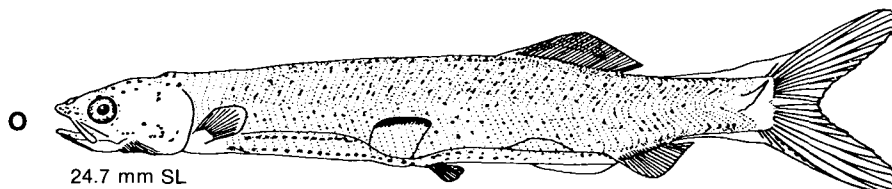
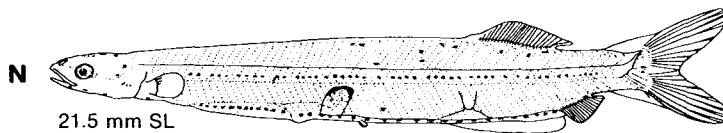
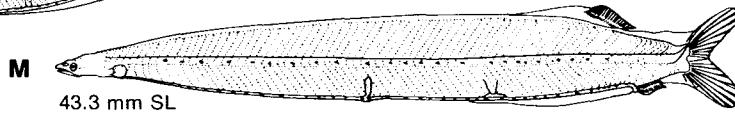
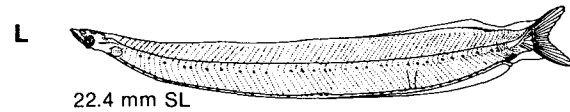
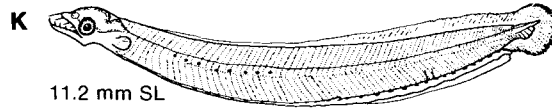
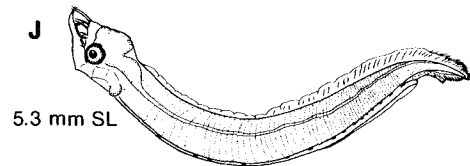
Fig. — A–B, Smith 1980; C, H, Wade 1962; D, Gehringer 1959b; E, G, Eldred 1967b; F, Richards 1969; I, Harrington 1958; J–O, Gehringer 1959a (C redrawn).

***Megalops atlanticus* (cont'd)**

ELOPIDAE



Elops saurus



F (eastern Atlantic specimen)

ALBULIDAE***Albula vulpes* (Linnaeus)**

Spawning: Location unknown; season prolonged.

Eggs — Undescribed.

- Larvae** — Leptocephalus-like, with forked caudal fin and small head.
- Gut very long (subequal to SL).
 - Period of larval growth, followed by shrinkage and thickening of body, and then resumption of growth up to juvenile stage.
 - Teeth obvious in smaller larvae (lost at metamorphosis).
 - Flexion occurs before 17 mm SL.
 - Fin formation: dorsal and anal fins begin to form at about 30 mm and counts are complete at about 64 mm; caudal rays complete at about 43 mm; pelvic very late forming at about 65 mm.
 - Fin migration: dorsal moves from myomere 55 to 29; anal moves from myomere 66 to 57.
 - Note relative positions of dorsal and anal fins.
 - Maximum size before metamorphosis about 64 mm.
 - Pigmentation: pigment restricted to dorsal edge of gut up to metamorphosis; after metamorphosis, spots are added to caudal base, some caudal rays, and a patch over the eye.

Meristic features

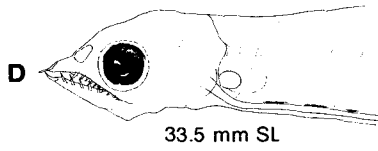
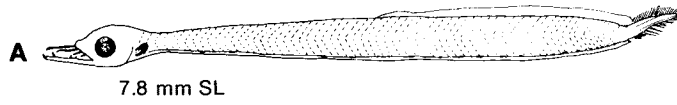
Myomeres: (65)67-69(72)
 Vert : 69-74
 D : 17-19
 A : 8-10
 C : 8+10+9+6

Best Characters for Separating Fork-tailed Leptocephalus-like Larvae

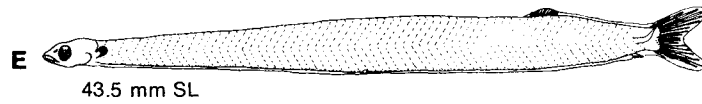
Character	<i>Megalops atlanticus</i>	<i>Elops saurus</i>	<i>Albula vulpes</i>
Myomeres	54-57	72-82	65-72
Maximum larval size	28 mm	43 mm	64 mm
Dorsal and anal fins	Opposite	Barely overlap	Separate

Albula vulpes

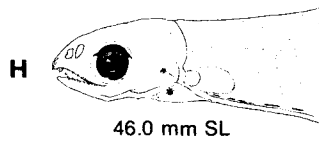
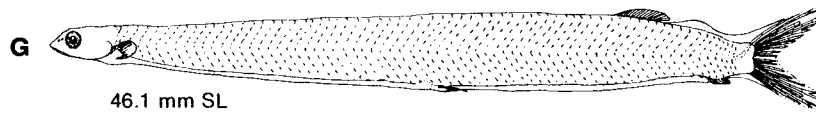
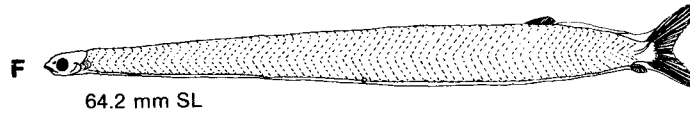
ALBULIDAE



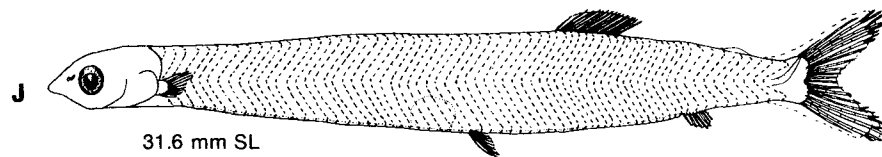
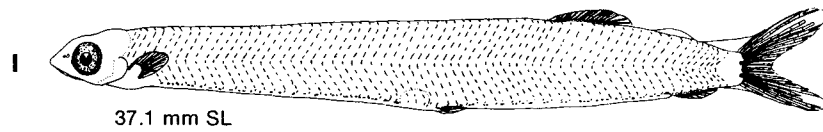
Air bladder inconspicuous at about myomere 30.



Head becomes less leptocephalus-like



Dorsal and anal fins move anteriorly



Head becomes proportionately larger

