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Environment

## 'Ghost Fish' Revelation May Alter Marlin's Status

, March 2, 2007 · Marine biologists say they've discovered a kind of living ghost — a giant predatory fish with a sword-like bill and a tail so blue it seems to glow. The roundscale spearfish was documented just twice in the last century. Experts blame the case of mistaken identity, at least in part, on the spearfish's resemblance to the white marlin.

And now, the reappearance of this "ghost fish" may force regulators to revise their estimates of how many marlin are swimming in the Atlantic — and reconsider pleas to give them greater protection.

Megan Bradley  
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## Fish Ecology in the News

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NPR

The focus of the article is the 'discovery' of the roundscale spearfish, *Tetrapturus georgii*. It's been seen two times previous to this news bit, and what its appearance means for the future of the white marlin.

This story's related to fish ecology because of the new species, and the strange morphological similarity of the two genetically distinct fish species, as well as the population analysis that's going to be needed now to determine what the true status is of the white marlin.

There are many players in this story. Human players include recreational fishermen and their guides, long-line fishermen, the slew of scientists looking for a obvious clue to tell the two species apart, and the managers and officials from ICCAT who have to make the calls on the future of both species. Non-human players are the roundscale spearfish, and the white marlin.

The socioeconomic issues involved are most significant for those recreational fishing guides, and long-line fishermen who are going to have to face the new regulations that will be established to protect the white marlin.

The reporting of this story is accurate and unbiased with the radio interview working to show the wonder at the discovery of a new species right under our noses and the impact it will have on our population estimates for white marlin.

From a fish-ecology perspective we need population estimates for both species, it would be useful to determine how the two species differentiated, and it will be important to find a way to determine the difference at sight rather than with genetics.