

Fish-families-fishermen

Mystic Seaport Museum - Mystery fish is a crocodile longtom



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Mystery fish is a crocodile longtom

Richard Story, Aitutaki-based fisheries officer at the Ministry of Marine Resources, contacted Cook Islands News yesterday with the information and said though the fish was common on the eastern coast of Rarotonga, it was not known for often coming into shore like the one caught. They're very common on the outer reef, a lot of the fly fishing people catch them when they're out there, Story said.

Mystery fish is a crocodile longtom

Proof perhaps, that it is a fish eat fish world after all. .

Mystery fish is a crocodile longtom

The fish in question was caught at Avana with raw chicken thrown off a wharf. They are a common schooling fish at the drop-off, mainly on the east side of Rarotonga. They do sometimes come into the harbour at Avarua because it is close to the sea, but they are not a lagoon fish.

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Islander anecdotes tell of them leaping into lighted canoes with such force that their bills became embedded in the woodwork. He said the fish went by a number of Maori names, including kaku and papa at Rarotonga. There is not much of a commercial market for longtom, which may be difficult to sell given their bones are green.

Mystery fish is a crocodile longtom

Fishermen in Australia say that at night, a light on the water attracts schooling longtom so much that they leap at it. Crocodile longtom can grow to about 80 centimetres in length and is one variety in the large longtom family, which is closely related to the houndfish, garfish and flying fish families.

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