

A Rare Case of Completely Ambicoloured Atlantic Halibut, *Hippoglossus hippoglossus*, from the Lower St. Lawrence Estuary, Quebec

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An Atlantic Halibut (*Hippoglossus hippoglossus*) (41.4 cm fork length) with the same pigmentation on the blind side as on the ocular side (ambicoloration) was captured in the lower St. Lawrence estuary, Canada, on 24 June 2004. This specimen represents the most extreme case of ambicoloration published for this species to date. As in other cases of extreme ambicoloration, this specimen shows other signs of abridged metamorphosis and reduced asymmetry, such as incomplete migration of the left eye and a hooked dorsal fin. Studies of hatchery-reared larvae have shown that the most common cause of malpigmentation, including ambicoloration, in halibut is a diet containing inadequate amounts and proportions of essential unsaturated fatty acids shortly before metamorphosis. Even though not expected to be common in the wild, inadequate diet for a short duration before metamorphosis is the most likely cause of ambicolouration in wild halibut.

Key words: Atlantic Halibut, *Hippoglossus hippoglossus*, ambicolouration; malpigmentation, metamorphosis, eye migration, hooked dorsal fin, St. Lawrence estuary, Quebec.