

Studies on the Zoarcidae (Teleostei: Perciformes) of the southern hemisphere. IX. A new species of *Pachycara* from the southwestern Atlantic

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Abstract

A new species of deep-sea eelpout, *Pachycara alepidotum*, is described from four specimens, 199–282 mm SL, collected in the upper bathyal zone off Rio Grande do Sul state, southern Brazil, and is the first record of the genus in the southwestern Atlantic. It is characterized by its lack of scales and ventral lateral line, few caudal vertebrae and only 1–2 rakers on the upper limb of the first gill arch. The largest specimen is an adult female.

Key words: *Pachycara*, Zoarcidae, eelpout, Brazil, southwestern Atlantic

Introduction

Fishes of the eelpout genus *Pachycara* inhabit the upper slopes and abyssal plains of most regions, but are notably absent in the western Pacific, Mediterranean Sea and Arctic Ocean (Anderson 1989). Seven species have been described since the senior author's 1989 paper (Møller 2003; Anderson and Fedorov, 2004; Biscoito and Almeida, 2004). Less than half (38%) of the species occur in the bathyal zone; the rest are abyssal.

The bathyal ichthyofauna off southern Brazil is poorly known, but a few surveys have been initiated (e.g., Parin and Andriashev 1972; Roux 1973; Post 1978; Haimovici *et al.* 1994). During bottom-trap fisheries operations for the red crabs *Chaceon notialis* and *C. ramosae* on the upper slope off southern Brazil, the Japanese vessel KINPO MARU 58 captured four specimens of a new *Pachycara* species, the first record of the genus in the southwestern Atlantic. These and other fishes were sent to the second author by an onboard observer as a donation. The purpose of this paper is to describe this new species,