



A new species of *Cottunculus* (Teleostei: Psychrolutidae) from the Mid Atlantic Ridge

INGVAR BYRKJEDAL¹ & ALEXEI M. ORLOV²

¹Dept. Natural History - Zoology, Bergen Museum, University of Bergen, Muséclass 3, N-5007 Bergen, Norway.

E-mail: ingvar.byrkjedal@zmb.uib.no

²VNIRO, 17 V, Krasnoselskaya, Moscow, 107140, Russia. E-mail: orlov@vniro.ru

Abstract

Cottunculus tubulosus n.sp. is described from one specimen caught in the summer of 2004 in the Northeast Atlantic, at about 2000 m depth in the Mid Atlantic Ridge. The species is characterised by a slender body, a long head, large pointed cranial spines, large bony tubules along the lateral line, prominent dermal prickles along the back, dorsal and anal fins set far posterior, a short caudal peduncle, and no banded colour patterns. From morphological characters, the species seems closely related to the South African species *C. spinosus*.

Key words: Psychrolutidae, *Cottunculus*, Mid Atlantic Ridge, MAR-ECO

Introduction

Among the approximately 29 species of fathead sculpins (Psychrolutidae) eight species are considered by Eschmeyer (2007) to belong to the genus *Cottunculus* Collett, 1875 (subfamily Cottunculinae), yet from a morphological analysis Nelson (1982, 1989) concludes that one of these, *C. gyrioides* Weber, 1913, belongs to the subfamily Psychrolutinae (possibly genus *Ebinania*). The remaining seven species are all benthic and range in depth from shallow inshore waters to about 2200 m. They are distributed in the Pacific (*C. nudus* Nelson, 1989) and Atlantic oceans (*C. granulatus* Karrer, 1968; *C. spinosus* Gilchrist, 1906; *C. thomsonii* (Günther, 1882); *C. microps* Collett, 1875; *C. sadko* Essipov, 1937; *C. konstantinovi* Myagkov, 1991), *C. sadko* also in the Beaufort Sea (Nelson & Nakamura 1980, Nelson 1982, 1989, 2003, Fedorov & Nelson 1986, Myagkov 1991, Mecklenburg et al. 2002). While *C. nudus*, *C. granulatus* and *C. spinosus* are found in tropical waters or on the Southern Hemisphere, the other species range from tropical to northern temperate and arctic waters.

A specimen of Psychrolutidae was caught during the cruise of R/V “G.O. Sars” on the Mid Atlantic ridge in the summer of 2004 for the “MAR-ECO” project (<http://www.mar-eco.no/>). The specimen clearly belongs to the genus *Cottunculus*, as diagnosed by Nelson (1989), and bears similarities with *C. spinosus* Gilchrist, 1906 described from South African waters. However, it differs sufficiently from all known species of *Cottunculus* in proportions and in a number of meristic and other characters to be considered a new species. We here describe this new species of *Cottunculus*.

Material and methods

The specimen, was caught 17 July 2005 at N 51°45' – W 29° 33' with bottom trawl at a depth of almost 2000