



Two new species of striped *Pseudochromis* from the Philippine Islands and Indonesia, with a redescription of *P. colei* (Perciformes: Pseudochromidae)

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Abstract

Pseudochromis ammeri **sp. nov.** and *P. eichleri* **sp. nov.** are described from Indonesia (Raja Ampat Islands, West Irian and Halmahera) and the Philippines (Calamianes Group, Boracay and northern Palawan), respectively. In having in combination a dark longitudinal stripe on the body and the anterior tip of the palatine tooth patch directed medially behind posterolateral arm of vomerine tooth patch, the two species closely resemble *P. colei* Herre from the Philippines. The latter species is redescribed on the basis of the holotype from Culion and two specimens recently collected in northern Palawan. The three species closely resemble each other but differ in live coloration and several scale count characters.

Key words: Pseudochromidae, dottyback, *Pseudochromis eichleri* **sp. nov.**, *Pseudochromis ammeri* **sp. nov.**, *Pseudochromis colei*, systematics

Introduction

Fishes of the Indo-Pacific fish subfamily Pseudochrominae were revised by the first author (Gill 2004), who recognised 80 species in ten genera. Additional new species have been subsequently described, particularly in the genus *Pseudochromis* Rüppell (1835), mostly resulting from new collections from the highly biodiverse “Coral Triangle” area of the West Pacific. We herein describe two additional new species of the genus from the Coral Triangle. An individual of one of the new species from Boracay Island, Philippine Islands, was illustrated by Eichler and Myers (1997) as *P. colei* Herre (1933), which they also reported from northern Indonesia. Previously, *P. colei* was known only on the basis of the holotype from Culion, Calamianes Group, Philippine Islands. The identification and distribution information were provided by the first author; the record from Indonesia was based on a photograph by R.M. Pyle of an individual at Tanjung Sipsipi, Halmahera (0°39'N 128°23'E). However, as noted by Gill (2004), more careful examination of the photographs showed that these identifications were in error. Although the photographed individuals closely resembled the holotype of *P. colei* in general morphology and in overall colour pattern (though the live coloration of *P. colei* was unknown at that time), they differed in having much smaller scales. Furthermore, the Halmahera and Boracay Island individuals differed slightly from each other in live coloration, raising doubts that they were conspecific. However, as Gill (2004) lacked specimens, he was unable to assess their taxonomic status.

Since publication of Gill's (2004) revision, the second and third authors have collected and photographed specimens of *P. colei* in northern Palawan, specimens conspecific with the Boracay Island fish in northern Palawan and the Calamianes Group, Philippines, and specimens of the Halmahera species in the Raja Ampat Islands and the west coast of West Papua, Indonesia. The latter species is now relatively well known to divers, and has been illustrated in several fish guides (e.g. Kuitert & Tono-zuka 2001, Michael 2004, Kuitert & Debelius 2006). These photographs, as well as underwater observations of all three species by the second and third authors, have revealed consistent differences in coloration. Similarly, comparison of specimens has revealed other morphological differences. We therefore herein present descriptions of the two new species and a redescription of *P. colei*.