



Alloblennius frondiculus, a new species of blenny from the Andaman Islands (Teleostei: Blenniidae: Salariaiini)

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Abstract

A new species of blennioid fish, tribe Salariaiini, is described based on a 23.8 mm SL specimen collected from the Andaman Islands, eastern Indian Ocean. It differs from other species of *Alloblennius* in having a pinnately branched supraorbital cirrus about equal to eye diameter in height; lower jaws with relatively large, darkly pigmented labial flap anteriorly on each side of chin; pectoral fin with 10 or 11 distinct, small dark spots; and anteriormost preopercular pore position with a vertical pair of pores. The distribution of the new species is notable because the four previously described species of the genus are known only from the western Indian Ocean and Red Sea. A table comparing the five species of *Alloblennius* is presented.

Key words: Blenniidae, *Alloblennius frondiculus*, new species, Andaman Is.

Introduction

The purpose of this paper is to describe a new species of the blenny genus *Alloblennius* based on a single specimen collected from the Andaman Islands so its scientific name will be available for inclusion in a book nearing completion by G. R. Allen and M. V. Erdmann. The new *Alloblennius* is the fifth species of the genus and its occurrence in the northeastern Indian Ocean is notable because the genus was previously known only from the western Indian Ocean and Red Sea. *Alloblennius jugularis* (Klunzinger 1871) is known from only from the Gulf of Aqaba and Red Sea; *A. pictus* (Lotan 1970) occurs in the Gulf of Aqaba, Red Sea and Djibouti, Gulf of Tadjoura; *A. parvus* Springer and Spreitzer 1978 has the widest distribution and is known from the Comoro Is., Mauritius, Madagascar, South Africa (Sodwana Bay), Mosambique and southern Oman (Kuria Muria Is.); and *A. anuchalis* (Springer and Spreitzer 1978), is known from only five specimens (Springer *et al.* 1998), three from Mauritius and two from the southern Arabian Sea (coast of Oman).

In their synopsis of the tribe Salariaiini, Smith-Vaniz and Springer (1971) described the new genus *Alloblennius* (type-species: *Blennius jugularis* Klunzinger 1871), redescribed the type-species and *Alloblennius pictus* (Lotan), and distinguished their new genus from three others to which they believed it was most closely related: *Rhabdoblennius* Whitley 1930 (type-species: *Blennius rhabdotrachelus* Fowler and Ball 1924); *Antennablennius* Fowler 1931 (type-species: *Blennius hypenetes* Klunzinger 1871); and the monotypic *Hirculops* Smith 1959 (type-species: *Blennius cornifer* Rüppell 1830). These four genera, with inclusion of the new species described herein, total 20 species (Patzner *et al.* 1990). All of these species have low numbers of relatively immovable teeth (20–44 dentary and 25–58 premaxillary) in adults, upper lip without free dorsal margin (except in *Alloblennius frondiculus*); terminal dorsal- and anal-fin rays connected to caudal peduncle by a membrane; dorsal fin spines typically XII (XI–XIII); and segmented caudal-fin rays 13, with 7–9 branched.

In his review of the Blenniidae (Norman 1943) considered *Rhabdoblennius* and *Antennablennius* so closely related that he recognized them only as subgenera. Chapman (1951:348) also failed to appreciate some of the