



A new species of *Nemipterus* (Pisces: Nemipteridae) from the Western Indian Ocean

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Abstract

A new species of threadfin bream, *Nemipterus flavomandibularis*, from the Western Indian Ocean is described and figured. The new species appears most closely related to *N. bipunctatus* (Valenciennes), but differs principally in colour pattern: *N. flavomandibularis* is distinct from *N. bipunctatus* in having two yellow bands on the snout, the upper lip narrowly edged with yellow; and lower lip and chin beneath lip yellow, this colour extending as a narrow band posteriorly to lower margin of opercle. Also, in *N. flavomandibularis* the scale rows below the lateral line are more or less horizontal (versus distinctly ascending anteriorly in *N. bipunctatus*), and the maxillary reaches to between level of posterior nostril and anterior margin of eye (versus reaching to below the anterior half of the eye in *N. bipunctatus*).

Key words: Nemipteridae, *Nemipterus flavomandibularis*, new species, Western Indian Ocean

Introduction

Sampling of trawl catches by the junior author during a survey of the demersal fish fauna of the Mascarene Plateau between the Seychelles and Mauritius under the UNDP/GEF/UNOPS Agulhas and Somali Current Large Marine Ecosystem (ASCLME) Project by the RV *Dr Fridtjof Nansen* in October–November 2008 yielded two species of *Nemipterus*—*N. zysron* (Bleeker 1856) and a fish that could not be assigned to any of the species illustrated in the FAO species catalogue for the family Nemipteridae (Russell 1990).

Subsequent examination of this material by the senior author showed it to be a hitherto undescribed species, which had been previously misidentified from the Seychelles as *Nemipterus peronii* (Valenciennes in Cuvier & Valenciennes 1830) (Smith & Smith 1963; Amaoka *et al.* 1976). Additional specimens from the Mascarene Plateau, collected by the Japanese FV *Ryuyo-Maru No. 2* in 1978, also were located in the National Museum of Nature and Science, Tsukuba, Japan. The specimens collected from the Mascarene Plateau are described herein as a new species, and a key to species of *Nemipterus* of the Western Indian Ocean is provided.

Material and methods

Specimens are deposited in the Australian Museum, Sydney (AMS); California Academy of Sciences, San Francisco (CAS); Museum National d'histoire Naturelle, Paris (MNHN); National Museum of Nature and Science, Tsukuba (NSMT), Museum and Art Gallery of the Northern Territory, Darwin (NTM); and South African Institute for Aquatic Biology, Grahamstown (SAIAB). Methods of counting and measuring specimens follow Russell (1986). Lengths of specimens are standard length (SL) unless otherwise indicated, and all measurements are expressed in millimetres (mm) rounded to the nearest 0.1 mm. In the description, measurements and counts for the holotype are given first; those for the paratypes, where different from the holotype, are enclosed in parentheses.