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A new goatfish of the genus *Upeneus* (Mullidae) from Angoche, northern Mozambique

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Abstract

A new goatfish, *Upeneus saiab* **n. sp.** (Mullidae), is described from six specimens collected off Angoche, northern Mozambique, during a research cruise of the RV *Dr. F. Nansen* in August 2009. *Upeneus saiab* **n. sp.** differs from all congeneric species in the following combination of characteristics: seven dorsal-fin spines, 29 total gill rakers, body depth at anal-fin origin 17–19% SL, and pectoral-fin length 20–21% SL. Detailed comparisons with the eight other species of the *japonicus* group are made and a key for Western Indian Ocean species is provided. A new record of *Upeneus pori* for KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa, is reported based on *in situ* photographs. The need for further exploration of the rather long and ecologically diverse Mozambican coast and adjacent areas of southeastern Africa for the occurrence of yet undescribed or unreported goatfish species is emphasized.

Key words: *Upeneus saiab*, new species, *Upeneus pori*, new record, *japonicus* species group, coastal habitats

Introduction

Over its entire range of ca 2 750 km in length, the Mozambican coast is ecologically fragmented and diverse as a result of changing coastline, shelf width and bottom structure, and local incidences of upwelling, river runoffs, estuaries, islands, banks, coral reefs, mangrove forests, and seagrass beds (e.g., Lutjeharms 2006; ASCLME 2012; http://earthtrends.wri.org/). As a consequence the different habitats may be populated by rather different assemblages composed of organisms which occur in one habitat but are not necessarily encountered in others. Hence an essential prerequisite for studies aiming at preparing species inventories for such a long and diverse coastline is to collect representative samples from all kinds of habitats and examine those samples in detail taxonomically. In the tropical, biodiversity-rich setting of the Mozambican coast the need for such exploration applies even to relatively well-sampled and common groups of fishes such as the goatfishes (Mullidae).

Goatfishes occur in a variety of tropical and temperate coastal habitats and have significance as fishery resources and ecological indicators (Uiblein 2007). In Mozambique, goatfishes are an important component of demersal fish assemblages and artisanal fisheries. During bottom trawl surveys with the RV *Dr. Fridtjof Nansen* of the Sofala Bank, central Mozambique, in 1982 and 1990, goatfishes were found to be common on the entire shelf (Sætersdal et al. 1999). In a study of the artisanal fisheries management in the Nampula province, northern Mozambique, Lopes & Gervasio (2003) found goatfishes of the genus *Upeneus* to be of high importance as a fishery resource. In 2007, bottom trawling with RV *Dr. F. Nansen* at a number of stations along the entire coast of Mozambique resulted in collection of a large number of goatfishes (Uiblein & Heemstra 2010), allowing detailed taxonomic studies. Based on these samples and comparative material, regional reviews of the three goatfish genera *Mulloidichthys*, *Parupeneus*, and *Upeneus* for the Western Indian Ocean have been published (Randall & Heemstra 2009, Uiblein & Heemstra 2010, Uiblein 2011). The material collected off the Mozambican coast contributed to the description of four species new to science (*Parupeneus minys* Randall & Heemstra, 2009, *P. nansen* Randall & Heemstra, 2009, *Upeneus margarethae* Uiblein & Heemstra, 2010, *U. suahelicus* Uiblein & Heemstra, 2010) and several new records for this area.

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