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Eviota santanai, a new Dwarfgoby from Timor-Leste (Teleostei: Gobiidae)

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Abstract

Eviota santanai is described based on four specimens from Timor-Leste, taken in 5–8 m depth. In general coloration pattern, the species is most similar to *E. latifasciata*, but differs in the cephalic sensory-pore system pattern, the absence of an occipital spot, and live color including pinkish-mauve bars. *Eviota santanai* has a dorsal/anal fin-ray formula of 8/8, 5th pelvic-fin ray absent, some lower pectoral-fin rays branched, and IT and PITO pores absent.

Key words: *Eviota santanai*, *Eviota latifasciata*, Lesser Sunda Islands, Timor-Leste

Introduction

The country of Timor-Leste occupies the northeastern half of the island of Timor, which is the eastern-most of the Lesser Sunda Islands in Southeast Asia. Bordered by the Savu Sea to the west, the Banda Sea to the north and the Timor Sea to the south, Timor-Leste sits just above Australia and has biogeographic influences of both the Western Pacific as well as the northeastern Indian Oceans. A former Portuguese colony that was subsequently made a province of Indonesia in the 1970's, Timor-Leste gained its independence in 2002. Timor-Leste is part of the East Indian Archipelago, extending from the Andaman Sea to the Solomon Islands and northward to the Philippines, and is located in the world's premier area for marine biodiversity, mainly due to the extraordinary wealth of coral reef organisms. Allen and Erdmann (2012) recorded 2,631 species of reef fishes from the East Indian Archipelago, a total that is far richer than for any other major biological province. Although lying relatively close to the hypothetical center of diversity, Timor-Leste represented a critical gap in the knowledge of this important region. Though the island of Timor was previously surveyed by 19th and 20th century ichthyologists (including French scientists from the *Géographe* and *Uranie* expeditions in the early 1800's, Dutch physician Pieter Bleeker in the mid 1800's, the Dutch expedition *Siboga* in 1909 and the American *Argo* and *Naga* expeditions between 1959-1961), these surveys utilized trawling, dredging and various fishing techniques and fish market visits to compile specimens, and hence significantly undersampled the small and cryptic reef fishes that typically comprise at least half the local ichthyofauna and that are most effectively surveyed using scuba-diving methods (Allen & Erdmann, 2013).

Based upon the request of the national government of Timor-Leste and the United States Agency for International Development's (USAID's) Coral Triangle Support Partnership, a marine rapid assessment (MRAP) was conducted along the northern coastline of Timor-Leste in August 2012 in order to assess the condition and biodiversity of the coral reefs of the region and specifically to provide recommendations for the zonation and management of the recently-gazetted Nino Konis Santana National Park (Erdmann & Mohan, 2013). Coral reef fish biodiversity was surveyed from 0-70 m depth at 20 sites by the second author and G. R. Allen. Among the 741 species of reef fish recorded was a striking pinkish-mauve and white-colored species of the goby genus *Eviota* resembling *E. latifasciata* that is herein described as new.

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