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Redescription of the percoid fish *Symphysanodon andersoni* Kotthaus (Symphysanodontidae) from the northwestern Indian Ocean, based on the holotype and the second known specimen

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Abstract

Symphysanodon andersoni was described in 1974 from a single specimen collected southwest of Socotra Island, near the entrance to the Gulf of Aden. A more recent report (2003) of its capture in the Gulf of Kutch, Arabian Sea, was based on a misidentification. The second known specimen of the Bucktoothed Slopefish, *S. andersoni*, (at 204 mm SL the largest known specimen of the genus *Symphysanodon*) was collected off the south coast of Oman, Arabian Sea, in April 2014. *Symphysanodon andersoni* is distinguishable from its congeners by number of tubed scales in the lateral line, 60 to 65 versus 42 to 59 in the other species of the genus. In view of the fact that *S. andersoni* is poorly known, we redescribe it based on the holotype and the new specimen collected off Oman and provide the first color photograph of the species.

Key words: *Symphysanodon andersoni*, Indian Ocean, Arabian Sea, Socotra Island, Oman

Introduction

The marine fish family Symphysanodontidae contains a single genus, *Symphysanodon* Bleeker 1878, and 12 described species (Anderson & Bineesh 2011, Anderson & Springer 2005, Khalaf & Krupp 2008, Quérou *et al.* 2009). In addition, McCosker (1979) and Anderson & Springer (2005) reported a species of *Symphysanodon*, as yet undescribed, that was obtained from the stomach of a coelacanth (*Latimeria chalumnae*) caught in the Comoros in the southwestern Indian Ocean. Later Heemstra *et al.* (2006) mentioned an undescribed species of *Symphysanodon* from the Comoros that may be conspecific with the species reported from the coelacanth stomach. Also, Campos *et al.* (2009) reported two larval *Symphysanodon*, collected off southern Brazil, that may represent another undescribed species. In view of the fact that the genus *Symphysanodon* is not well known, with most species poorly represented in museum collections, it seems likely that other species await discovery.

Symphysanodon (largest known specimen 204 mm SL) occurs in depths of about 80 to 700 m in the Atlantic, Pacific, and Indian oceans. Five species of *Symphysanodon* have been described from the Indian Ocean (*sensu lato*), viz., *S. andersoni* Kotthaus 1974 (southwest of Socotra Island, near the entrance to the Gulf of Aden), *S. rhax* Anderson & Springer 2005 (off the Maldivian Islands), *S. disii* Khalaf & Krupp 2008 (Gulf of Aqaba), *S. pitondelafournaisei* Quérou *et al.* 2009 (off Reunion Island), and *S. xanthopterygion* Anderson & Bineesh 2011 (Arabian Sea off southern India). Manilo & Bogorodsky (2003) reported *Symphysanodon andersoni* from the Gulf of Kutch, an inlet in the northeastern quadrant of the Arabian Sea on the west coast of India. The second author (MVC) asked L. G. Manilo, at the National Museum of Natural History in Kiev (Ukraine), to check that record. Manilo found three specimens of *Symphysanodon*, identified as *S. andersoni*, in the Kiev collection, and sent MVC data on two of them (the third is in poor condition). Based on the number of lateral-line scales (54, 55) and total number of gillrakers on the first arch (39, 40), those two specimens appear to be identifiable as *S. xanthopterygion*.