

***Pseudoplesiops wassi*, a new species of dottyback fish (Teleostei: Pseudochromidae: Pseudoplesiopinae) from the West Pacific**

ANTHONY C. GILL¹ & ALASDAIR J. EDWARDS²

¹Fish Research Group, Department of Zoology, The Natural History Museum, Cromwell Road, London SW7 5BD, U.K.; t.gill@nhm.ac.uk

²School of Biology, Ridley Building, University of Newcastle, Newcastle upon Tyne NE1 7RU, U.K.; a.j.edwards@newcastle.ac.uk

Abstract

Pseudoplesiops wassi is described from 34 specimens, 17.7–28.8 mm SL, from throughout the West Pacific. It is closely related to *P. collare* from Indonesia, with which it shares 14 precaudal vertebrae (more than any other congener). It is distinguished from *P. collare* and all other congeners in having the following combination of characters: dorsal-fin rays I,27–29, usually I,28; pelvic-fin rays I,3; scales in lateral series 32–39, usually 33–36; and circumpeduncular scales 16.

Keywords: Pseudochromidae, Pseudoplesiopinae, *Pseudoplesiops wassi* new species, taxonomy

Introduction

Fishes of the Indo-Pacific subfamily Pseudoplesiopinae are distinguished from other pseudochromids in having a single tubed scale at the gill opening, rather than a series of tubed scales. Five genera are recognised in the subfamily. *Pseudoplesiops* Bleeker is diagnosed by a single synapomorphy - medial laminae of the pelvic bones expanded dorsally - and the following combination of external characters: scales in lateral series 26–42; lower lip complete (uninterrupted at symphysis); and preopercular pores usually 7 (rarely 6 or 8), with a pore present at the upper terminus of the preopercle (Gill & Edwards, 1999). The genus is mostly confined to the eastern Indian and Pacific Oceans, though two recently described species occur in the Maldive Islands, central Indian Ocean (Gill & Edwards, 2002). As part of an ongoing revision of the genus, we herein describe a new species from the West Pacific in order to make its name available for a forthcoming guide to South Pacific fishes (Randall, in press).