

***Neobythitoides serratus*, a new bathyal genus and species from the East China Sea (Teleostei, Ophidiidae)**

JØRGEN G. NIELSEN¹ & YOSHIHIKO MACHIDA²

¹Zoological Museum, Universitetsparken 15, DK-2100 Copenhagen, Denmark

²Faculty of Science, Kochi University, Akebono, Kochi 780-8520, Japan

Abstract

A new genus and species of Ophidiidae is described on the basis of two specimens from the East China Sea. It is characterized by the following combination of characters: body slender, opercular spine strong, eye small (twice in snout), hind margin of preopercle serrated, two median basibranchial tooth patches with or without a pair of small circular tooth patches, sagitta large with undivided sulcus and 10–11 long rakers on anterior gill arch. It seems most similar to *Neobythites*, from which it can be separated by the small horizontal diameter of eye window 2.5–2.7 % SL vs. 3.7–6.0 % SL, the serrated hind margin of preopercle vs. preopercle with 0–3 spines and no serration, and a sagitta with undivided sulcus vs. divided sulcus.

Key words: Ophidiiformes, Ophidiidae, *Neobythitoides serratus* gen. et sp. nov., bathyal, East China Sea

Introduction

During a revision of the Indo-Pacific species of the genus *Neobythites* (Nielsen 2002) two specimens from the East China Sea, catalogued in the Department of Biology, Kochi University, as *Neobythites* sp., could not be assigned to *Neobythites* or any other ophidiid genus. The revision was based on about 1000 specimens and revealed the existence of 42 species. A comparison between the present material and that from the revision and furthermore the eight species from the Atlantic (Nielsen 1999) shows that the two specimens represent a species different from any of the 50 known *Neobythites*-species, based on the differences mentioned below. Therefore, to keep the new species within the genus *Neobythites* a new generic diagnosis would be required, an act that would make the definition of *Neobythites* unusually broad compared to other neobythitine genera. A phylogenetic analysis of the Neobythitinae needs to be made, but a comparison of the new