

A taxonomic revision of the catshark genus *Poroderma* Smith, 1837 (Chondrichthyes: Carcharhiniformes: Scyliorhinidae)

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Abstract

This paper examines the alpha level taxonomy of the genus *Poroderma* Smith, 1837 (Chondrichthyes: Scyliorhinidae), which is endemic to South Africa. A novel species identification key is presented for *Poroderma*, and a comprehensive review of the taxonomy (including type material and synonyms) and distribution of all taxa is presented. *Conoporoderma* Fowler, 1934 is shown to be a junior synonym of *Poroderma* Smith, 1837, *P. marleyi* Fowler, 1934 is shown to be a junior synonym of *P. pantherinum*, and a new colour form of *P. pantherinum* is described. This review is the first to offer a comprehensive description of the colour variation exhibited by *P. pantherinum*. The genus *Poroderma* contains the contemporary taxa *P. africanum* (Gmelin, 1789) and *P. pantherinum* (Smith in Müller and Henle, 1838).

Key words: Scyliorhinidae, *Poroderma africanum*, *Poroderma pantherinum*, taxonomy, revision, South Africa

Introduction

In southern African waters there are a total of 17 scyliorhinid species in nine genera ranging along the entire coastline of South Africa extending northwards to at least Somalia in the Indian Ocean, and at least into southern Angolan waters in the Atlantic Ocean (Bass *et al.* 1975; Smith and Heemstra 1986; Compagno *et al.* 1989; Compagno and Human 2003; Human 2003). Many species of scyliorhinids in South Africa are common to abundant, and southern Africa has an unusually high percentage of scyliorhinid endemics with a total of two endemic genera and 13 endemic species. The systematics of the scyliorhinids have been reviewed in recent times by Springer (1979) and Compagno (1984b, 1988), with South African treatments by Smith and Heemstra (1986), Bass *et al.* (1975), and Compagno *et al.* (1989), however the total diversity of scyliorhinid sharks is still unre-