

A new wobbegong shark, *Orectolobus hutchinsi* n. sp. (Orectolobiformes: Orectolobidae) from southwestern Australia

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Abstract

Orectolobus hutchinsi n. sp. is a moderate-sized wobbegong shark found in shallow continental shelf habitats off Western Australia. It occurs from Coral Bay (near North West Cape) south to Groper Bluff (west of Bremer Bay) in depths of 9–106 m where it is caught as by-catch of local gill-net, longline, rock lobster and recreational fisheries. It is sympatric with two other commercial wobbegong species, *Orectolobus maculatus* and *O. ornatus*, but differs from these and other Indo-Pacific species in having the combination of a few unbranched dermal lobes, relatively tall dorsal fins, no warty tubercles on the back of adults, and dark brown corrugated saddles without white spots and blotches. Some details of its biology are also provided.

Key words: *Orectolobus hutchinsi*, Orectolobiformes, wobbegong shark, southwestern Australia

Introduction

The wobbegongs (F. Orectolobidae) are represented by three genera and seven species in the Indo–Pacific (Compagno *et al.*, 2005). The group has not been subjected to a formal review and several taxonomic problems exist. At least six species are thought to occur in Australian seas (Last and Stevens, 1994): *Eucrossorhinus dasypogon* (Bleeker, 1867), *O. maculatus* (Bonnaterre, 1788), *O. ornatus* (de Vis, 1883), *O. wardi* Whitley, 1939, *Sutorectus tentaculatus* (Peters, 1864) and an un-named species, *O. sp. A*. All of these species, apart from *O. wardi* and *E. dasypogon*, were thought to occur off southwestern Australia. More recent research suggests that other undescribed species occur off Western Australia (Last and Chidlow, unpublished data). The new species was informally