



***Halaelurus maculosus* n. sp. and *H. sellus* n. sp., two new species of catshark (Carcharhiniformes: Scyliorhinidae) from the Indo–West Pacific**

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Abstract

Two scyliorhinid catsharks of the genus *Halaelurus*, *H. sellus* n. sp. and *H. maculosus* n. sp., are described from north-western Australia and eastern Indonesia, respectively. The new species, which have been confused with *H. boesemani* (western North Pacific) and *H. buergeri* (northwestern Indian Ocean), have a colour pattern consisting of dark bars and dark spots but differ from these species by a combination of coloration, morphometrics, and meristics. These species differ from southern African endemics, *H. lineatus* and *H. natalensis*, in having a snout tip that is rounded rather than upturned. A related catshark *Halaelurus quagga*, from the northwestern Indian Ocean, has a colour pattern consisting of more numerous dark bars without spots.

Key words: *Halaelurus maculosus*, *Halaelurus sellus*, new species, Scyliorhinidae, Australia, Indonesia

Introduction

The genus *Halaelurus*, proposed by Gill (1862) for *Scyllium buergeri* Müller & Henle, 1838, consists of 5 described species: *H. boesemani* Springer & D'Aubrey, 1972, *H. buergeri* Müller & Henle, 1838, *H. lineatus* Bass, D'Aubrey & Kistnasamy, 1975, *H. natalensis* (Regan, 1904) and *H. quagga* (Alcock, 1899) (Compagno, 1988; Compagno *et al.*, 2005). The closely related genus *Bythaelurus* Compagno, 1988, previously a subgenus of *Halaelurus*, comprises 7 described species: *B. alcocki* (Garman, 1913), *B. canescens* (Günther, 1878), *B. clevai* (Séret, 1987), *B. dawsoni* (Springer, 1971), *B. hispidus* (Alcock, 1891), *B. immaculatus* (Chu & Meng in Chu *et al.*, 1982) and *B. lutarius* (Springer & D'Aubrey, 1972). Members of the genus *Bythaelurus* differ from species of *Halaelurus* in having eyes not noticeably elevated on head vs. noticeably elevated on dorsal surface of head; gill slits not elevated above lateral head margin vs. elevated above lateral head margin; body soft with thin skin vs. body firm with thick skin; precaudal tail about 0.8–0.9 of precloacal length vs. 0.5–0.6 of precloacal length (Compagno, 1988). Representatives of the genus *Bythaelurus* are typically uniformly dark in coloration and have a scattered distribution in upper to lower slope regions of the Eastern Pacific and Indian Ocean, with a single species occurring in the Western Pacific. Members of the genus *Halaelurus* have an attractive colour pattern and occur essentially in the Indo–West Pacific, from South Africa to Japan and Australia, in insular and continental shelf regions (Compagno, 1988; Compagno *et al.*, 2005).

Recent market surveys in eastern Indonesia produced a large collection of scyliorhinid catsharks, along with many other chondrichthyans. Included in this material were 28 individuals of a catshark that was originally identified tentatively as *Halaelurus buergeri*. Comparison of these Indonesian *Halaelurus* with material from northwestern Australia revealed two new species that differ significantly from other currently recognised members of the genus. This paper provides descriptions of these new species.