

A new species of tonguefish (Pleuronectiformes: Cynoglossidae) from Taiwanese waters

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Abstract

Syphurus multamaculatus new species, described from nine specimens captured in deep waters off Taiwan, is distinguished from congeners by the following combination of characters: predominant 1–2–2–2–2 pattern of interdigitation of dorsal pterygiophores and neural spines, 14 caudal-fin rays, 92–94 dorsal-fin rays, 79–82 anal-fin rays, 9 abdominal and 50–51 total vertebrae, 5 hypurals, deep body (28.6–35.1 % SL), small scales (102–108 scales in longitudinal series, 45–48 scales in transverse row), blackish-brown ocular-side opercle, bluish-black blind-side opercle, uniformly reddish-brown to dark-brown ocular-side background pigmentation with some specimens also having 5–7 mostly complete crossbands, and uniformly white to light-yellow blind side with dense patches of blackish-brown chromatophores predominantly covering pterygiophore regions of the dorsal and anal fins. *Syphurus multamaculatus* were retrieved from commercial catches of fishing trawlers landed at three regional fish ports operating in deep waters off northeastern and southwestern Taiwan. The only information associated with these specimens is the general region of capture based on where fishing trawlers operate. Data on relative abundance, depth of capture, geographic distribution, and microhabitat conditions where this species is captured are unavailable at this time.

Key words: *Syphurus*, flatfish, deep waters, systematics, Pepperdot tonguefish

Introduction

Syphurus Rafinesque comprises a genus of small to medium-sized, left-sided flatfishes belonging to the Cynoglossidae. Approximately 77 species are considered valid in this genus, with 27 species having been recorded from the Indo-Pacific region (Bleeker 1879; Alcock 1889; Alcock 1891; Alcock 1894; Alcock 1899; Gilbert 1905; Fowler 1934; Chabanaud 1954; Chabanaud 1955a; Chabanaud 1955b; Chabanaud 1955c; Chabanaud 1956; Munroe 1992; Krabbenhoft & Munroe 2003; Munroe 2006; Munroe & Hashimoto 2008; Lee *et al.* 2009). Indo-Pacific *Syphurus* can be separated into phenotypic groups of species with either 12 or 14 caudal-fin rays (Munroe 1992). Twenty species with 14 caudal-fin rays have been described from the Indo-Pacific, of which, ten species have been collected in the western Pacific Ocean, including *S. australis* McCulloch, *S. bathysphilus* Krabbenhoft & Munroe, *S. gilesii* (Alcock), *S. hondoensis* Hubbs, *S. marmoratus* Fowler, *S. megasomus* Lee, Chen & Shao, *S. schultzi* Chabanaud, *S. strictus* Gilbert, *S. thermophilus* Munroe & Hashimoto, and *S. undatus* Gilbert. Of these, only *S. bathysphilus*, *S. gilesii*, and *S. thermophilus* usually have 90–100 dorsal-fin rays, 75–85 anal-fin rays and <55 total vertebrae.