Description of a new scorpionfish (Scorpaenoidei, Sebastolobinae) from the tropical eastern Pacific

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Abstract

A new spiny scorpionfish, Trachyscorpia verai, is described from a single specimen caught by deepwater longline off Puerto López (Ecuador, Tropical Eastern Pacific). This scorpionfish is distinguished from all other species of Trachyscorpia by a unique combination of characters: dorsal-fin spines 12, vertebrae 26, and gas bladder absent. Other diagnostic characters are: maxilla unscaled, third dorsal spine long, and pelvic spine short. This is the second species of Trachyscorpia known from the TEP and the sixth worldwide.

Key words: Trachyscorpia verai n. sp., Sebastidae, Sebastolobinae, TEP, Ecuador

Introduction

The scorpionfish subfamily Sebastolobinae (Eschmeyer, 1986) comprises three genera: Adelosebastes Eschmeyer, Abe & Nakano, 1979; Sebastolobus Gill, 1881; and Trachyscorpia Ginsburg, 1953. The first genus is monospecific and confined to the North Pacific, the second genus comprises three species, mostly from the northern Pacific but two spreading south to Baja California (Orr et al., 2000). The genus Trachyscorpia is more widespread and comprises five species (McCosker, 2008): Trachyscorpia cristulata (Goode & Bean, 1896) from the North Atlantic (both sides); Trachyscorpia eschmeyeri Whitley, 1970 from the southeastern Atlantic to the southwestern Pacific (South Africa to New Zealand); Trachyscorpia carnomagula Motomura, Last & Yearsley, 2007 from the southwestern Pacific; Trachyscorpia longipedicula Motomura, Last & Yearsley, 2007 from the southwestern Indian Ocean; and Trachyscorpia osheri McCosker, 2008 from the Galápagos Islands. All Sebastolobinae are deep-water benthic fishes (200–2000 m).

The present specimen was identified as a sebastolobine in the genus Trachyscorpia by the following characters: pectoral fin notably bilobed (vs. rounded in other subfamilies), 12 dorsal-fin spines (vs. 14–18 in Sebastolobus), 9 dorsal-fin soft rays (vs. 12–13 in Adelosebastes), head well ossified and with strong spines, teeth on the palatines, no occipital pit, lateral line (LL) of tubed scales continuing onto the caudal-fin base (Poss, 1999, Motomura et al., 2007). This is the first member of the subfamily described from continental Ecuador (Jiménez-Prado & Béarez, 2004).

Material and methods

Counts and measurements were made following Hubbs and Lagler (1947), Eschmeyer (1969), Randall & Eschmeyer (2001), and Motomura et al. (2005). The last two soft rays of the median fins are counted as one as each pair is associated with a single pterygiophore. Total gill raker (GR) counts include rudiments. Vertebral