



Redescription of the perciform fish *Symphysanodon disii* (Symphysanodontidae) from the Gulf of Aqaba, Red Sea, with comments on *S. pitondelafournaisei* and sexual dimorphism in the genus

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Abstract

Symphysanodon disii was described in 2008 from a single specimen collected in October 1999 from the Gulf of Aqaba. More recently, March 2008, four additional specimens of this species were collected in the Gulf. The following characters in combination distinguish *S. disii* from the other species in the genus: parapophyses on the first caudal vertebra, tubed scales in the lateral line 48 to 50, total number of first-arch gillrakers 34 to 37, sum of total number of gillrakers plus lateral-line scales (in individual specimens) 82 to 87, pectoral-fin rays 16 or 17, fleshy orbit diameter 7.2 to 8.3 % SL, and second anal-spine length 8.3 to 9.7 % SL. We redescribe *S. disii*, comment on *S. pitondelafournaisei* from the southwestern Indian Ocean off Reunion Island, and discuss sexual dimorphism in the genus.

Key words: *Symphysanodon*, Gulf of Aqaba, Reunion Island, sexual dimorphism

Introduction

The marine fish family Symphysanodontidae contains a single genus, *Symphysanodon* Bleeker, 1878, and 12 described species (Anderson and Bineesh, 2011; Anderson and Springer, 2005; Khalaf and Krupp, 2008; Quéro *et al.*, 2009). In addition, McCosker (1979) and Anderson and Springer (2005) reported a species of *Symphysanodon*, as yet undescribed, that was obtained from the stomach of a coelacanth (*Latimeria chalumnae*) caught in the Comoros in the southwestern Indian Ocean. Later Heemstra *et al.* (2006) mentioned an undescribed species of *Symphysanodon* from the Comoros that may be conspecific with the species reported from the coelacanth stomach. Also, Campos *et al.* (2009) reported two larval *Symphysanodon*, collected off southern Brazil, that may represent another undescribed species. In view of the fact that the genus *Symphysanodon* is not well known, with most species poorly represented in museum collections, it seems likely that other species await discovery.

Symphysanodon (with adults reaching less than 175 mm SL) occurs in depths of about 80 to 700 m in the Atlantic, Pacific, and Indian oceans. Five species of *Symphysanodon* have been described from the Indian Ocean (*sensu lato*), viz., *S. andersoni* Kotthaus, 1974 (southwest of Socotra Island, near the entrance to the Gulf of Aden; also reported from the Gulf of Kutch, an inlet in the northeastern quadrant of the Arabian Sea on the west coast of India by Manilo and Bogorodsky, 2003); *S. rhax* Anderson and Springer, 2005 (off the Maldives Islands); *S. disii* Khalaf and Krupp, 2008 (Gulf of Aqaba); *S. pitondelafournaisei* Quéro *et al.*, 2009 (off Reunion Island); and *S. xanthopterygion* Anderson and Bineesh, 2011 (Arabian Sea off southern India). Herein we redescribe *S. disii* based on the holotype and four additional specimens caught in the Gulf of Aqaba, comment on *S. pitondelafournaisei* collected off Reunion Island, and discuss sexual dimorphism in the genus.