



Sparisoma choati, a new species of Parrotfish (Labridae: Scarinae) from the tropical eastern Atlantic

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Abstract

The parrotfish *Sparisoma choati* is described from the tropical eastern Atlantic Ocean. It is genetically unique and also differs from its congeners by coloration as follows: initial phase individuals and females greyish brown to greyish red, with chin and belly paler and reddish brown scales irregularly distributed along flanks resulting in a general mottled appearance; terminal phase individuals with brownish red head and upper half of anterior two-thirds of body, ventral portion of central third of body bright yellow-green, posterior third of body dark greenish gray and dark spot on upper fifth of pectoral fin base. The new species is found in rocky reefs along the coast and oceanic islands off West Africa, from Cape Verde and Senegal south to the islands of São Tomé and Príncipe and Angola.

Key words: taxonomy, biodiversity, Perciformes, West Africa

Resumo

O peixe-papagaio *Sparisoma choati* é descrito do Oceano Atlântico tropical oriental. Ele é geneticamente único e também difere de seus congêneres na coloração da seguinte forma: indivíduos em fase inicial e fêmeas marrom acinzentados a vermelho acinzentados, com parte inferior da cabeça e ventre mais pálidos e escamas marrom avermelhadas irregularmente distribuídas ao longo dos flancos resultando num padrão geral de aparência de mosaico; indivíduos em fase terminal com cabeça e metade superior dos dois terços anteriores do corpo vermelho amarronzada, porção ventral do terço central do corpo verde-amarelo brilhante, terço posterior do corpo cinza esverdeado escuro e mancha escura no quinto superior da base da nadadeira peitoral. A nova espécie é encontrada em recifes rochosos ao longo da costa e ilhas oceânicas da África Ocidental, do Cabo Verde e Senegal às ilhas de São Tomé e Príncipe e Angola.

Introduction

Recent analyses of the taxonomic status of Atlantic Parrotfishes have resulted in the revalidation and/or description of several species in the western Atlantic (Moura *et al.*, 2001; Gasparini *et al.*, 2003; Robertson *et al.*, 2006; Pinheiro *et al.*, 2010). In contrast, the fauna of the eastern Atlantic remained relatively unstudied. Randall (1981) reported four species of Parrotfishes for the eastern Atlantic: *Scarus hoefleri* (Steindachner 1881), *Sparisoma cretense* (Linnaeus 1758), *Sparisoma rubripinne* (Valenciennes 1840) and *Nicholsina collettei* Schultz 1968. Both *Scarus hoefleri* and *Sparisoma cretense* are very distinctive species and there are no significant taxonomic questions involving them. *Nicholsina collettei* was initially described as a subspecies of *Nicholsina usta* (Valenciennes 1840), but based on the genetic distinctiveness of eastern and western Atlantic forms, Robertson *et al.* (2006) raised its taxonomic rank to that of species.

The Eastern Atlantic species referred to as *S. rubripinne* historically has been problematic. The oldest record of it is probably by Capello (1872), who lists *Scarus squalidus* Poey 1860, originally described from Cuba, as