



## ***Adelotremus leptus*, a new genus and species of sabertooth blenny from the Red Sea (Teleostei: Blenniidae: Nemophini)**

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### **Abstract**

*Adelotremus leptus* is described as a new genus and species of blenniid fish based on a single gravid female, 35.4 mm standard length, collected from a polychaete tube in 15 m depth in the Red Sea near Sharm el Sheikh, Egypt. The genus differs primarily from other nemophin genera (except *Xiphasia*) in having pterygiophores of the dorsal-fin spines broadly contacting robust vertebral neural spines, and the combination of dorsal-fin spines and rays IX, 19, total vertebrae 32, ventral margin of gill opening opposite dorsalmost 5th or 6th pectoral-fin ray and no lateral line. An identification key is provided for genera of the blenniid tribe Nemophini.

**Key words:** Blenniidae, Nemophini, sabertooth blenny, new genus and species, Red Sea

### **Introduction**

The purpose of this paper is to describe a new species of sabertooth blenny collected from 15 m depth at Naama Bay (Marsa el At) near Sharm el Sheikh, Egypt, based on a single specimen first observed hiding in a calcareous polychaete tube. Although the specimen is assignable to the tribe Nemophini, and superficially resembles some species of *Petroscirtes* Rüppell 1830, its complex of characters do not agree with any of the presently recognized genera of the tribe. The genera of sabertooth blennies comprising the Nemophini were compared in detail by Smith-Vaniz (1976) and include five genera and 55 species (Patzner *et al.*, 2009; Smith-Vaniz and Allen, 2011) plus the new taxon described herein. The collective common name for these blenniids refers to a prominent pair of canines in the lower jaw, which are used only for defense or in interspecific aggressive interactions. Other characters of the tribe (except as noted) are: dentaries connected by a tight interdigitating joint at ventral midline; cirri associated with at least the symphyseal dentary canal pores; cranial bones of adults ornamented with numerous small depressions or pits (weakly developed in *Xiphasia*); and swim bladder present (except in *Xiphasia*). Several synapomorphies of the Nemophini could not be examined in the new genus because it would have required clearing and staining the holotype and only known specimen: supracleithrum articulating with the epiotic and posttemporal (articulating only with the posttemporal in other blenniids); no basisphenoid; and absence of an intercalar bone (except in the subgenus *Dasson* Jordan and Hubbs 1925). Hastings and Springer (2009) provide a good summary and discussion of these and other characters used to define major lineages within the Blenniidae.

All of the currently recognized genera of sabertooth blennies are broadly distributed throughout the Indo-West Pacific; a single species, *Plagiotremus azaleus* (Jordan and Bollman 1890), occurs in the eastern Pacific Ocean. Unlike most blennies, nemophins often swim off the bottom when active. The two species of *Xiphasia* are also exceptional in being mostly active nocturnally, and *X. matsubarai* Okada and Suzuki 1952 is semi-pelagic.