



## ***Planonasmus parini* n. g. and n. sp., a new genus and species of false cat sharks (Carchariniformes, Pseudotriakidae) from the deep northwestern Indian Ocean off Socotra Islands**

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### **Abstract**

A new genus and species of the carcharhiniform family Pseudotriakidae is described based on three specimens caught near the Socotra Islands in the northwestern Indian Ocean. The first specimen and holotype of *Planonasmus parini* **g. n.** and **sp. n.** was caught during cruise 17 of RV ‘Vityaz’ in 1988/89 along the deep western Indian Ocean. Two further specimens of the new genus and species were caught somewhat later by commercial trawlers close to the locality of the holotype. The new genus differs from the two other pseudotriakid genera *Gollum* and *Pseudotriakis* by the presence of oral papillae, the absence of nictitating eyelids, a longer head, an intermediate prenarial snout length, an intermediate number of tooth rows per jaw, a first dorsal fin of intermediate height and length and with a white free rear tip, a caudal peduncle of intermediate length, and fewer vertebrae.

**Key words:** Selachii, Dwarf False Catshark, deep water, Gulf of Aden, key to pseudotriakid species

### **Introduction**

The deep-water chondrichthyan fauna is generally little known. Only few historic and modern expeditions explored the Indian Ocean, with only spotty bottom sampling, like “Novara” (1865–1867), “Challenger” (1872–1876), “Valdivia” (1898–1899), “Dana” (1928–1930), “Albatross” (1947–1948), “Galathea” (1950–1952), “Anton Bruun” (1963–1964), and “Meteor” (1964–1965). One of the world’s most comprehensive collections of deep-water Chondrichthyes from the western Indian Ocean was sampled aboard the Russian RV ‘Vityaz’ during its 17<sup>th</sup> cruise in 1988 and 1989. Geographically, this deep-water expedition ranged from the Gulf of Aden to the southern end of the Madagascar Ridge at Walters Shoal. It included remote and largely unknown localities such as around the Socotra Islands, the slope off Somalia and Kenya, the deep southern Mozambique Channel, the Madagascar Ridge, and the Saya de Malha Bank. The holotype of the new shark genus and species *Planonasmus parini* from off the Socotra Islands was caught during this survey together with several further new taxa of deep-water sharks, skates and rays, and chimaeras. The two non-type specimens of the new genus and species were also caught near the Socotra Islands on board commercial trawlers and preserved by S.I. Usachev from YugNIRO in Kerch, Ukraine. A similar specimen caught near the Maldives is mentioned as “Proscylliid Shark” by Anderson and Ahmed (1993), and as “Pygmy False Catshark” by Compagno *et al.* (2005). The overall three caught specimens (C. Anderson, pers. comm.) possibly represent a different, undescribed but closely related species. However, these specimens were not made available for examination. The description of the new genus and species represents contribution no. 8 to the series “Deep-water chondrichthyan fishes of RV ‘Vityaz’ cruise 17 and other Soviet cruises in the Indian Ocean”, initiated with the description of *Rhinochimaera africana* (Compagno *et al.* 1990).

The new genus is placed in the family Pseudotriakidae Gill, 1893 due to characters specified in the family diagnosis by Compagno *et al.* (2005), especially the bell-shaped snout and the elongated first dorsal fin that is