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***Silhouettea chaimi* Goren, 1978, a junior synonym of *Papillogobius melanobranchus* (Fowler, 1934) (Teleostei: Gobiidae)**

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Abstract

The high resemblance of *Silhouettea chaimi* Goren, 1978 to two *Papillogobius* species, *P. melanobranchus* and *P. reichei* was noticed from their published descriptions. The comparison of types of *S. chaimi* with comparative material of *P. melanobranchus* and *P. reichei* confirmed the lack of morphological differences between two nominal species, *S. chaimi* and *P. melanobranchus*. Therefore, *S. chaimi* is placed as a junior synonym of *P. melanobranchus*.

Key words: *Silhouettea chaimi*, *Papillogobius melanobranchus*, junior synonym, Gobiidae

Introduction

The gobiid species *Silhouettea chaimi* was described by Goren (1978) from the Gulf of Eilat, northern Red Sea. There is no published data on other collected specimens of this species besides types from the original description. However, the sample of additional material identified as this species is kept in the Hebrew University of Jerusalem and was provided by D. Golani. The species was listed with original name in Goren's (1979) review on the Red Sea Gobiinae and in the checklists of Red Sea fishes (Dor, 1984; Goren & Dor, 1994). Miller (1988) redescribed genus *Silhouettea* and made a note on *S. chaimi*. He concluded, based on several important characters (general shape, fin meristics, head lateral-line system) that this species clearly didn't fit in the redescribed genus *Silhouettea*, and suggested temporary placement of *S. chaimi* to *Acentrogobius* Bleeker. Golani and Bogorodsky (2010) followed his opinion and listed this species as *Acentrogobius chaimi* (Goren, 1978) in their updated checklist of the Red Sea fishes. However, the morphology of *S. chaimi* is clearly distinct from the diagnosis of the *Acentrogobius* (Hoese, 1986).

The similarity of *Silhouettea chaimi* Goren, 1978 with one *Papillogobius* species, *P. reichei* (Bleeker, 1854) was noticed by second author (SB) and mentioned in Bogorodsky *et al.* (2011). The described morphology of *S. chaimi* (Goren, 1978, and head lateral line system in Miller, 1988) showed high resemblance to *P. melanobranchus* and *P. reichei* published descriptions and diagnoses (Akihito *et al.*, 1984; Hoese, 1986; Goren, 1988; Randall & Goren, 1993; Larson & Lim, 2005; Kovačić & Golani, 2007; Kimura *et al.*, 2009; Bogorodsky *et al.*, 2011). *S. chaimi* types were compared to *P. melanobranchus* and *P. reichei* material and the status of *S. chaimi* as the junior synonym of *P. melanobranchus* was confirmed on examined material. The aim of the present paper is to clarify the systematic status of *S. chaimi*, and to give the evidence for this conclusion from the improved and corrected description of former *S. chaimi* types.

Materials and methods

Morphometric and meristic methods follow Schliewen & Kovačić (2008). The length of the specimens is presented as standard length + caudal fin length. The standard length (SL) is measured from the most-anterior end of the upper lip to the base of the caudal fin (posterior end of the hypural plate); the caudal-fin length is the horizontal