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Checklist of the marine and estuarine fishes of Madang District, Papua New Guinea, western Pacific Ocean, with 820 new records

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Table of contents

Abstract	5
Introduction	5
Study area	6
Fish fauna of Madang District	11
Materials and methods	11
Annotated checklist of fish species of Madang	12
Pentanchidae	12
Hemiscylliidae	12
Orectolobidae	13
Triakidae	13
Carcharhinidae	14
Squalidae	14
Etmopteridae	14
Narcinidae	14
Myliobatidae	15
Arhynchobatidae	15
Dasyatidae	15
Chimaeridae	16
Megalopidae	16
Anguillidae	16
Moringuidae	16
Chlopsidae	17
Muraenidae	17
Synphobranchidae	21
Ophichthidae	22
Muraenesocidae	23
Congridae	23
Pristigasteridae	24
Engraulidae	24
Chirocentridae	24
Clupeidae	24
Plotosidae	25
Stomiidae	25
Synodontidae	26
Ipnopidae	28
Myctophidae	28
Bregmacerotidae	31
Carapidae	32
Ophidiidae	32
Bythitidae	33
Lophiidae	34
Antennariidae	34
Mugilidae	35
Atherinidae	37
Melanotaeniidae	37
Exocoetidae	38
Hemiramphidae	38
Zenarchopteridae	39
Belonidae	40
Melamphaidae	40
Diretmidae	40
Holocentridae	40
Pegasidae	43
Solenostomidae	43
Syngnathidae	44
Aulostomidae	48
Fistulariidae	48
Centriscidae	48
Dactylopteridae	49
Setarchidae	49
Scorpaenidae	49
Synanceiidae	54

Tetrarogidae	55
Aploactinidae	55
Platycephalidae	56
Peristediidae	56
Cottidae	56
Psychrolutidae	57
Ambassidae	57
Acropomatidae	57
Serranidae	57
Pseudochromidae	66
Plesiopidae	67
Opistognathidae	68
Priacanthidae	69
Apogonidae	69
Sillaginidae	80
Malacanthidae	80
Coryphaenidae	81
Echeneidae	81
Carangidae	81
Leiognathidae	83
Lutjanidae	84
Caesionidae	88
Lobotidae	90
Gerreidae	90
Haemulidae	90
Nemipteridae	91
Lethrinidae	93
Polynemidae	94
Mullidae	94
Toxotidae	97
Pempheridae	97
Bathyclupeidae	98
Monodactylidae	98
Kyphosidae	98
Chaetodontidae	99
Pomacanthidae	105
Terapontidae	108
Kuhliidae	109
Cirrhitidae	109
Cepolidae	111
Cichlidae	111
Pomacentridae	111
Labridae	125
Scaridae	140
Pinguipedidae	143
Percophidae	144
Trichonotidae	144
Creediidae	144
Pholidichthyidae	145
Tripterygiidae	145
Blenniidae	147
Gobiesocidae	153
Callionymidae	154
Eleotridae	155
Gobiidae	156
Microdesmidae	178
Ptereleotridae	178
Ephippidae	179
Scatophagidae	179
Siganidae	179
Zanclidae	181
Acanthuridae	182
Sphyrnaeidae	187
Gempylidae	188

Scombridae	188
Psettodidae	189
Bothidae	189
Samaridae	190
Soleidae	190
Cynoglossidae	191
Balistidae	192
Monacanthidae	194
Ostraciidae	197
Tetraodontidae	197
Diodontidae	200
The marine and estuarine fish fauna of Madang and its endemism	200
Acknowledgments	237
Literature cited	238

Abstract

A checklist of the marine and estuarine fishes of Madang District is presented, combining both previous and new records. After the recent PAPUA NIUGINI 2012 expedition, a total of 1337 species in 129 families have been recorded from the region. One species and one family is not native (Cichlidae: *Oreochromis mossambicus*), but has been introduced. The native fish fauna of Madang therefore consists of 1336 species in 128 families. The largest families are the Gobiidae, Labridae, Pomacentridae, Apogonidae, Serranidae, Blenniidae, Chaetodontidae, Syngnathidae and Muraenidae, Scorpaenidae and Lutjanidae, Myctophidae, Acanthuridae, Scaridae, Holocentridae, Carangidae, Pomacanthidae and Tetraodontidae, and Caesionidae. A total of 820 fish species (61.4 % of the total marine and estuarine fish fauna) are recorded from Madang for the first time.

The fish fauna of Madang includes a total of 187 species of transitional waters and 1326 species in marine habitats. A total of 156 species of the marine or estuarine species also occurs in freshwater. Zoogeographically, 1271 species have a wide distribution range, most frequently a broad Indo-West Pacific distribution. Among the remaining species, only 8 are endemic to Madang District.

Anthropogenic threats to the fish fauna and habitats of Madang District include extensive fishing in Madang Lagoon, sometimes with destructive fishing practices; the discharge of untreated sewage of human settlements, mining and industrial developments into the lagoon and nearby oceanic habitats; and destruction of mangrove habitats by extensive construction work on the shores. These anthropogenic threats may call for conservation and monitoring measures in the near future.

Key words: Fishes, Papua New Guinea, Madang, checklist, distribution, endemism, new records

Introduction

Madang District is situated on the northeastern mainland coast of Papua New Guinea. Its dominant geographical feature is an extensive, unusual lagoon system north of its capital, Madang. The fish fauna of the district has been studied for about 100 years. It has recently been estimated to harbour approximately 800 fish species (Allen & Erdmann, 2012).

The present paper is an outcome of the PAPUA NIUGINI Expedition, which surveyed the marine fauna and flora of Madang district, Papua New Guinea between October 24 and December 26, 2012. The fish fauna of Madang Lagoon was examined from 25 Oct. 2012–08 Nov. 2012, mainly by visual and photographic census, supplemented by a few small collecting stations throughout the expedition, but specifically during first leg (named CORAL TRIANGLE 1, 25 Oct. 2012–08 Nov. 2012) on board the R/V Alis. An additional, larger segment of the deep-sea fishes collected during legs 4–5 of the expedition and previous one (BIOPAPUA Cruise; see Pante *et al.*, 2012) is still under examination; it could not be exclusively included in the present checklist.

In order to document the results of the expedition, as well as materials described in the literature and/or contained in scientific collections (valuable collections of fishes from Madang are deposited at AMS, ASIZ, BPBM, CAS, MNHN, NTUM, ROM, SMF, USNM, and WAM), a checklist of the marine and estuarine fishes of Madang District is provided in the present paper.

giving permission to examine specimens in their care: D. F. Hoese, M. McGrouther, J. R. Paxton, S. Reader, T. Trnski (all AMS), D. Didier (ANSP), O. Crimmen, N. Merrett (BMNH), J. E. Randall, A. Suzumoto (BPBM), W. N. Eschmeyer, T. Iwamoto (CAS), P. Kailola (KFRS), G. Duhamel, J.-C. Hureau (MNHN), K. Matsuura (NSMT), H. K. Larson (NTM), R. Winterbottom (ROM), T. Alpermann, W. Klausewitz, C. Köhler, F. Krupp, F. Uiblein, H. Zetsche (all SMF), J. Finan, S. Jewett, G. D. Johnson, K. Murphy, L. Palmer, D. G. Smith, V. G. Springer, J. T. Williams (all USNM), J. B. Hutchins, S. Morrison, K. Smith (all WAM). John E. Randall (Honolulu) and J. T. Williams (USNM) provided photographs of Madang fishes. Pascale Chabanet (IRD, Saint-Clothilde, Réunion) provided a photograph of *Ecsenius yaeyamaensis*. We are grateful to David W. Greenfield (California Academy of Sciences and University of Hawaii) and Richard Winterbottom (ROM) who assisted identifying a species of *Eviota*, Douglass F. Hoese (AMS) who identified *Silhouettea* sp., Seishi Kimura (FRLM) who assisted with the identification of atherinid specimens, Helen K. Larson (Queensland, Australia) who identified *Lobulogobius omanensis*, and William F. Smith-Vaniz (Florida Museum of Natural History, Gainesville, FL, USA) who identified *Caranx sexfasciatus*.

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