NEW AUSTRALIAN FISHES. PART 16.
A NEW SPECIES OF CRAPATALUS (LEPTOSCOPIDAE)

BY P. R. LAST¹ AND G. J. EDGAR²

¹CSIRO Division of Fisheries Research, GPO Box 1538, Hobart, Tasmania 7001, Australia
²CSIRO Division of Fisheries Research, PO Box 20, Marmion, Western Australia 6020, Australia.

Abstract


A sandfish, Crapatulus munroi, is described from southern Australia. It can be distinguished from other Australian species by its deeper body form and by the presence of scales on the lower half of the pectoral fin.

Introduction

Three members of the trachinoid family Leptoscoptidae, have been recorded from Australian waters. Lesueurina platycephala Fowler, which may be a senior synonym of <i>Crapatalus arenarius</i> McCulloch, is found commonly in exposed beach habitats of southeastern Australia.

The type locality of <i>Leptoscoptus macropygus</i> (Richardson) is recorded as Port Jackson, New South Wales but no Australian specimens have been seen since. This species occurs commonly off New Zealand and it is likely that Richardson's material became mixed at some stage.

The third, an undescribed species of <i>Crapatalus</i>, has been documented (Last, Scott and Talbot, 1983) and is formally described herein. The authors are presently revising the family.

Type specimens are deposited in the CSIRO Division of Fisheries, Hobart (CSIRO) and the Museum of Victoria, Melbourne (NMV)

<i>Crapatalus</i> Günther

<i>Crapatalus</i> Günther, 1861: 86.

Type species. <i>Crapatalus arenarius</i> McCulloch (monotypy).

<i>Crapatalus munroi</i> sp. nov.

Figure 1

<i>Crapatalus</i> sp. Last, Scott & Talbot, 1983: 425, fig. 30.95.

Material examined. Holotype. Tasmania. Verona Sands, D'Entrecasteaux Channel (43°17'S, 147°09'E), 1 m, beach seined, P.R. Last, 1978, CSIRO H636 (101 mm S.L.).

Paratypes. Tasmania. Chinamans Bay, Maria Island (43°39'S, 148°02'E), 1 m, beach seined, P.R. Last, 10 Apr 1977, CSIRO H640-01 (2 specimens, 41-52 mm S.L.). Flinders Island, dredged, J. Grant, 11 May 1977, CSIRO H638 (1 specimen, 58 mm S.L.). Hopetoun Beach, Dover, D'Entrecasteaux Channel (43°19'S, 147°01'E), 1 m, beach seined, P.R. Last and R. Green, 19 Jun 1977, CSIRO H639-01 (1 specimen, 63 mm S.L.).


Diagnosis. Dorsal-fin rays 36-38; anal-fin rays 36-37; ventral-fin rays 1.5; pectoral-fin rays 21-23; lateral line scales 46-49.

Body elongate, compressed, tapering to caudal fin; maximum depth 4.0-5.2 in S.L.; head bulbous, rounded or slightly compressed, about 4 times wider than the body. Fins free simple on jaws, sometimes bifurcated on operculum, not papillated, 34-42 on lower jaw; 23-31 on upper jaw; 13-19 on operculum. Eyes dorsal, situated close to snout; interorbital distance short, less than three quarters transverse eye diameter. Mouth almost vertical; maxilla extending below anterior margin of eye. Teeth small, cariniform; in narrow bands in jaws and on palatines; two separate patches present on vomer. Scales cycloid, large, covering trunk, and pectoral and caudal fin...
bases; head naked except for small scaly patches on upper preoperculum and operculum; prepelvic area scaled. Dorsal and anal fin bases elongate, former shorter; rays short, simple. Pectoral fin large (21.7-24.4% S.L.), pointed; rays 8-9 generally longest, decreasing in length ventrally; upper part only slightly incised, rays mostly bifurcated; lower part moderately incised, rays divided into 4-6 portions. Pelvic fins jugular; inserted close to pectoral fin bases, shortest distance between them less than half interpelvic distance; extending posteriorly well behind anus. Caudal fin short, truncate. Isthmus without lappets. Reaches a total length of at least 115 mm.

Body white; upper half densely covered with numerous small, irregular brownish to golden markings which extend onto upper pectoral, dorsal and caudal fins. Preserved specimens yellowish or pink with peppery markings, mostly faint; some specimens immaculate.

**Distribution.** Off Victoria and Tasmania where, as a burying species, it lives mainly in soft sediments near the coast.

**Etymology.** In honour of Mr I.S. Munro, an eminent student of ichthyology, who discovered the species.

**Comparisons.** This species can be distinguished from *Lesueurina platycephala* by its deeper body form and the presence of scales on the lower part of the pectoral fin. A New Zealand species, *Crapatalus novaezelandiae* Günther, is similar in form but has prominent cutaneous flaps on the isthmus and papillated oral fimbriae.

**Acknowledgments**

We would like to extend our gratitude to Mr Rudie Kuiter who has provided photographs, type material and biological information on members of this family.

**Reference**