

NEW AUSTRALIAN FISHES. PART 12.
A NEW SPECIES OF *EUBALICHTHYS* (MONACANTHIDAE)

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Abstract

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Eubalichthys cyanoura is described as new from south-western Australian seas. It is distinguished from the closely related *E. gunnii* (Günther) by differences in coloration and several morphological features.

Introduction

Hutchins (1977) recognised 54 species of monacanthid fishes from Australian seas. One of these, *Eubalichthys gunnii*, was listed with a distribution ranging from Victoria to the southern portion of Western Australia. Subsequently, Hutchins and Thompson (1983) restricted *E. gunnii* to Victoria, Tasmania, and South Australia. They recognised the Western Australian form as a distinct species, its range overlapping with the former in South Australia. This paper describes the western form as new.

Methods were given by Hutchins (1977). The following abbreviations are used: AMS, Australian Museum, Sydney; WAM, Western Australian Museum, Perth; SL, standard length.

***Eubalichthys cyanoura* sp. nov.**

Figure 1

Eubalichthys gunnii.—Hutchins, 1977: 55 (in part).

Eubalichthys species Hutchins & Thompson, 1983: 68, 87, fig. 326.

Material examined. Holotype: Western Australia, Recherche Archipelago, Sandy Hook Island, J.B. Hutchins, speared at 20 m, 7 Apr 1977, WAM P.25762-001 (male, 232 mm SL).

Paratypes. Western Australia. Albany, Big, Grove, Department of Fisheries and Fauna, 6 May 1974, WAM P.24841-001 (159 mm SL); Geographe Bay, M. Walkere, fish trap, 18 Nov 1976, WAM P.28393-004 (156 mm SL); Safety Bay, south of Fremantle, B. Paxman, spear, 13 Apr 1975, WAM P.28865-002 (299 mm SL); AMS 1. 26445-001 (323 mm SL); off Fremantle, between Garden and Carnec Islands, J. Braun, handnet, 12 Jan 1977, WAM P.25998-001 (104 mm SL).

South Australia. Yorke Peninsula, Stenhouse Bay, J.B. Hutchins, speared at 8 m, 31 Mar 1981, WAM P.27137-001 (2 specimens, 138-238 mm SL).

Description. Dorsal fin rays 31-35; anal fin rays 32-34; pectoral fin rays 12-13 (mostly 13). Body elongate in male, somewhat deeper in female and juvenile, depth 2.1-2.9 in SL. Lateral profile of snout prominently convex in male, straight to slightly convex in female and juvenile. Ventral flap small. Caudal peduncle without spines or bristles. Skin velvety to rather coarse. Dorsal spine moderate to long (1.4-1.7 in head length), originating over centre to posterior one-third of eye, and partly received by a shallow groove in interdorsal space when depressed; spine with small downward-directed barbs, barbs decreasing in size with increasing SL, becoming obsolete in large individuals. Second dorsal and anal fins elevated anteriorly in male, outer border concave; fins not elevated in female and juvenile, outer border convex. Pelvic fin rudiment small to minute, consisting of 4 encasing scales, located about one-half eye diameter in advance of rear end of pelvis. Reaches a total length of 42 cm (36 cm SL).

Colour in life: Adult—head and body pale green, pale brown to blackish brown, covered with close-packed darker spots; dark brown lines and spots on snout and along anal fin base; mosaic pattern of dark brown to blackish blotches often present on side, or mosaic of pale lines only; 2 whitish bars usually present on

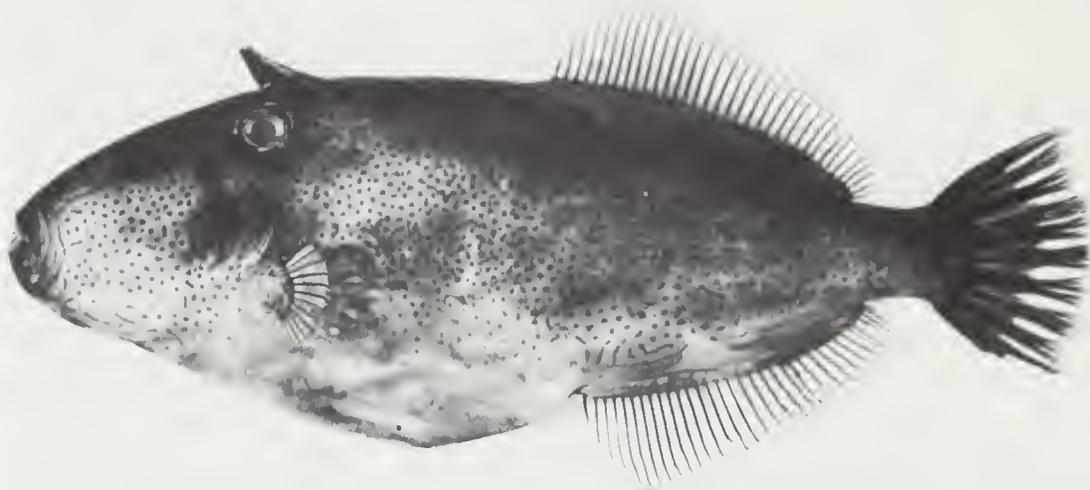


Figure 1. *Eubalichthys cyanoura*, WAM P.27609-001, 309 mm SL, male (non-type).

throat (may be pale and difficult to detect in large males). All fin rays green, integuments of first dorsal and caudal fins bright blue in male, hyaline in female. Juvenile—side of head and body with a mosaic of large dark blotches; spotting develops at about 100 mm SL.

Colour in preservative: base dark brown with markings as described above, except blue fin integuments black.

Distribution. Yorke Peninsula, South Australia (35°14'S, 137°02'E) to Dongara on Western Australia's west coast (29°15'S, 114°56'E).

Etymology. From the Greek *kyanos* (dark blue) and *oura* (tail) referring to the blue caudal fin of the male.

Remarks. *Eubalichthys cyanoura* is very similar in body shape to *E. gunnii*, although the juvenile is not as deep-bodied as similar-sized individuals of the latter species. In addition, the snout profile in lateral view of the juvenile is straight to

convex in *E. cyanoura*, concave in *E. gunnii*. However, the two differ most noticeably in colouration: *E. gunnii* lacks the dark spots and blue fin integuments of *E. cyanoura*. *E. gunnii* also has a network of pale lines on the side, breaking up the ground colour into many small darker blotches. The blotches of *E. cyanoura* are much larger, and arranged in a less obvious reticulate pattern, although in some large males, the pattern of blotches may be faint and therefore difficult to detect.

This species inhabits coastal reefs to 30 m, preferring exposed offshore areas. Juveniles have been found under jetties in coastal embayments.

References

- Hutchins, J.B. 1977. Descriptions of three new genera and eight new species of monacanthid fishes from Australia. *Rec. West. Aust. Mus.* 5: 3-58.
- Hutchins, J.B. and Thompson, M. 1983. *The Marine and Estuarine Fishes of South-western Australia. A Field Guide for Anglers and Divers.* Western Australia Museum: Perth.