



Review of the waspfish genus *Liocranium* (Scorpaeniformes: Tetrarogidae), with restoration of *L. pleurostigma* (Weber)

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Abstract

A taxonomic review of the waspfish genus *Liocranium* Ogilby, 1903 (Tetrarogidae) resulted in two species of the genus being regarded as valid: *L. praepositum* Ogilby, 1903 (type species of the genus) and *L. pleurostigma* (Weber, 1913) (previously regarded as a junior synonym of *L. praepositum*). *Liocranium pleurostigma* is distinguished from *L. praepositum* by colour pattern, gill-raker counts and several morphometrics, including upper-jaw length, depth of the posterior margin of the maxilla, length of the longest anal-fin soft ray, and position of the spine tip of the depressed pelvic fin. Lectotypes of the two nominal species are herein designated. *Liocranium pleurostigma* is distributed off the northwestern coast of Australia (east to Torres Strait), New Guinea and the Philippines, whereas *L. praepositum* occurs off the northeastern coast of Australia (north to about Hinchinbrook Island). Comments on the biogeography of *Liocranium* are also provided.

Key words: Waspfish, Tetrarogidae, *Liocranium*, *Liocranium pleurostigma*, *Liocranium praepositum*

Introduction

The waspfish genus *Liocranium* Ogilby, 1903 (Tetrarogidae) has recently been regarded as monotypic, consisting of *L. praepositum* Ogilby, 1903 which was originally described from off the coast of Queensland, Australia (e.g., Poss, 1999; Mandrytsa, 2001; Allen *et al.*, 2006). *Paracentropogon pleurostigma* Weber, 1913, originally described from off New Guinea, was regarded as a valid subspecies of *L. praepositum* (as *L. praepositum pleurostigma*) by Mees (1964a, b). Subsequently, it has been treated as a junior synonym of *L. praepositum* by recent authors (e.g., Gloerfelt-Tarp & Kailola, 1984; Sainsbury *et al.*, 1985; Larson & Williams, 1997).

Examination of the type series of *L. praepositum* and *P. pleurostigma*, and non-type material of *Liocranium* representing wide distributional ranges, showed that both nominal species were valid species of the genus; *L. praepositum* and *L. pleurostigma* are allopatric, occurring to the south-east and west of the Torres Strait respectively. The two species are herein redescribed in detail, along with a redefinition of the genus *Liocranium*. Lectotypes of *L. praepositum* and *P. pleurostigma* are herein designated. Comments are also made on the biogeography of *Liocranium*.