



***Entomacrodus solus*, a new species of blenny (Perciformes, Blenniidae) from the Red Sea**

JEFFREY T. WILLIAMS¹ & SERGEY V. BOGORODSKY²

¹ Division of Fishes, Department of Vertebrate Zoology, Museum Support Center, National Museum of Natural History, Smithsonian Institution, Suitland, MD, USA. Email: williamsjt@si.edu

² Station of Naturalists, Omsk, RUSSIA. E-mail: ic187196@yandex.ru

Abstract

Entomacrodus solus, new species, is described on the basis of 35 specimens collected by J.E. Randall on a shallow rocky shore at the end of a mangrove channel at Ras Mohammed, Red Sea. The new species belongs to the Nigricans Species Group, which is distinguished from all other blennies in having about the medial third of the ventral margin of the upper lip entire and the lateral thirds crenulate. Within the group, now consisting of 11 species, the new species is distinguished by having only single pores at each preopercular pore position, typically three predorsal commissural pores, and small white spots on lips, head and body. *Entomacrodus solus* is the only species of the circumtropical genus *Entomacrodus* known from the Red Sea.

Key words: Lonely blenny, fish, Ras Mohammed, Egypt

Introduction

Springer (1967) revised the circumtropical genus *Entomacrodus* and recognized 22 valid species. Springer & Fricke (2000) described two new species, one from the Western Indian Ocean and another from the western Central Pacific; Randall (2005) tentatively placed *E. niuafoouensis* (Fowler, 1932a) in synonymy of *E. epalzeocheilos* (Bleeker, 1859), which we reject as these two species are distinct and easily identified by differences in nuchal cirri (Springer, 1967, 1972); Hastings & Springer (2009) subsequently elevated two subspecies, *E. stellifer lighti* (Herre, 1938) and *E. thalassinus longicirrus* Springer, 1967, to full species status. Most species of *Entomacrodus* are similar in appearance (Springer, 1967; Randall, 2005), but several species groups may be distinguished by the crenulation pattern on the ventral margin of the upper lip.

The most recent checklist of the fishes of the Red Sea (Goren & Dor 1994) reported one species of the genus *Entomacrodus*, *E. epalzeocheilos*, based on specimens collected in 1975 by J.E. Randall at Ras Mohammed (sometimes spelled Ras Muhammad or Ras Mohammad). Randall's collection included 35 specimens, which were subsequently divided between two museums with 18 specimens going to the Bernice P. Bishop Museum (BPBM) and the other 17 deposited at the National Museum of Natural History, Smithsonian Institution (USNM). V.G. Springer provisionally identified the USNM specimens as *E. epalzeocheilos*, a member of the Striatus Group of *Entomacrodus*, probably because several of the specimens have multifid nuchal cirri and the smaller specimens have faint indications of crenulae medially on the upper lip.

While preparing a revised checklist of the Red Sea fishes (Golani & Bogorodsky *in press*), the second author asked J. E. Randall to re-examine the Red Sea *Entomacrodus* specimens housed at the BPBM and compare them with *E. epalzeocheilos*. Randall reported (pers. comm.) that the specimens have no crenulae on the medial third of the upper lip and have crenulae on the lateral thirds, placing these specimens in the Nigricans Group of *Entomacrodus*. A subsequent re-examination of the BPBM and USNM specimens revealed that the Red Sea specimens belong to an undescribed species in the Nigricans Group of