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## A new fish species of the subfamily Serraninae (Perciformes, Serranidae) from the Philippines

JEFFREY T. WILLIAMS<sup>1</sup> & KENT E. CARPENTER<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Division of Fishes, Department of Vertebrate Zoology, National Museum of Natural History, Smithsonian Institution, 4210 Silver Hill Road, Suitland, MD 20746, USA. E-mail [williamsjt@si.edu](mailto:williamsjt@si.edu)

<sup>2</sup>Department of Biological Sciences, Old Dominion University, Norfolk, Virginia 23529, USA. E-mail: [kcarpent@odu.edu](mailto:kcarpent@odu.edu)

### Abstract

A new species of serranine fish is described from the Philippine Islands. A single specimen of a new species, *Chelidoperca santosi*, captured by fishermen working in Palawan waters was discovered in the public fish market in Iloilo City, Panay, Philippines. Two additional specimens of the new species, also from the Philippines, were subsequently discovered in the collections of the Museum Victoria, Australia. The new species is currently known only from the Philippines and is characterized by its distinctive coloration with a row of four small dark spots on the snout (two in front of each eye) and two dark spots on the chin (one on each side of the symphysis of the dentaries), a white anal fin with six large yellow spots separated by broad white interspaces and a narrow yellow distal border, caudal fin with narrow yellow bars and a yellowish distal margin and no dark spots, and a combination of meristic and morphological characters.

**Key words:** *Chelidoperca santosi*, perchlet, Serranidae, Philippines, endemic

### Introduction

The Philippines, a major component of the Indo-Malay-Philippine Archipelago (IMPA), has the richest diversity of coastal marine fishes in the world (Carpenter & Springer 2005, Sanciangco *et al.* 2013). Although the Philippines have long been the focus of ichthyological research, ongoing studies of its ichthyofauna continue to reveal new and previously unknown fish species. A recent project in the Philippines to obtain specimen-vouchered tissue samples of the fish species found in Philippine fish markets resulted in the collection of a single colorful specimen of an undescribed species of serranid fish of the genus *Chelidoperca*. Subsequent searches at international museums led to the discovery of two additional Philippine specimens of this new species.

The genus *Chelidoperca* has seven nominal species (an eighth nominal species from the Atlantic has been reassigned to the genus *Serranus*) (Eschmeyer 2014). All seven of the available species names are currently recognized as valid (Eschmeyer 2014, Froese & Pauly 2014): *C. hirundinacea* (Valenciennes in Cuvier & Valenciennes 1831), *C. investigatoris* (Alcock 1890), *C. lecromi* Fourmanoir 1982, *C. maculicauda* Bineesh & Akhilesh in Bineesh *et al.* 2013, *C. margaritifera* Weber 1913, *C. occipitalis* Kotthaus 1973, and *C. pleurospilus* (Günther 1880). These fishes are relatively small (usually less than 200 mm in length) and typically are taken using trawl nets at depths greater than 100 m. As a result there is little known about these perchlets. Only four species are currently known from the western Pacific (*C. hirundinacea*, *C. lecromi*, *C. margaritifera* and *C. pleurospilus*). *Chelidoperca lecromi* has only been reported from the Chesterfield Islands and American Samoa. *Chelidoperca hirundinacea* and *C. pleurospilus* are distributed from Indonesia to Japan, and *C. margaritifera* from New Guinea to Japan (Masuda *et al.* 1984).

The purpose of this paper is to describe the new species of *Chelidoperca*, which currently is known only from the Philippine Islands, bringing the total to eight valid species in the genus.

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