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## A new species of the genus *Stiphodon* from Palawan, Philippines (Gobiidae: Sicydiinae)

KEN MAEDA<sup>1</sup> & HERMINIE P. PALLA<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Marine Genomics Unit, Okinawa Institute of Science and Technology Graduate University, 1919-1 Tancha, Onna, Okinawa 904-0495, Japan. E-mail: [goby@live.jp](mailto:goby@live.jp)

<sup>2</sup>College of Fisheries and Aquatic Sciences, Western Philippines University - Puerto Princesa Campus, Puerto Princesa City, 5300 Palawan, Philippines. E-mail: [hppalla@yahoo.com](mailto:hppalla@yahoo.com)

### Abstract

Palawan is an island in the western Philippines, and the freshwater fish fauna of this island has received limited research attention. In the present study, a new goby species, *Stiphodon palawanensis*, is described on the basis of 57 specimens collected from freshwater streams on the island. This species can be distinguished from its congeners by having nine segmented rays in the second dorsal fin, 15 rays in the pectoral fin, a pointed first dorsal fin in males, premaxilla with 45–71 tricuspid teeth, the nape and posterior half of the occipital region covered by cycloid scales, 9–11 dusky transverse bars laterally on the trunk and tail, a line of black blotches (in male) or a black band (in female) on the distal part of the second dorsal fin, and the first dorsal and pectoral fins lacking distinctive markings. The new species has been found only on the Sulu Sea side of central Palawan. Three congeners, *S. percnopterygiomus*, *S. atropurpureus*, and *S. pulchellus* have also been recorded from Palawan.

**Key words:** *Stiphodon palawanensis*, taxonomy, freshwater fish

### Introduction

Sicydiine gobies of the genus *Stiphodon* are distributed in tropical and subtropical freshwater streams from Sri Lanka and the western coast of Sumatra in the Indian Ocean to southern Japan, north-eastern Australia, and French Polynesia (Watson, 1995; Ebner & Thuesen, 2010; Maeda & Tan, 2013; Maeda *et al.*, 2015). Although more than 30 species of *Stiphodon* are considered valid, the taxonomy of this genus is not yet well understood (Maeda, 2013).

Herre (1927) described three new species of goby belonging to the genus *Microsicydium* Bleeker based on specimens from the Philippines: *Microsicydium atropurpureum* Herre (type locality, Santa Ines, Rizal, Luzon), *Microsicydium formosum* Herre (type locality, Kolambugan, Lanao del Norte, Mindanao), and *Microsicydium pulchellum* Herre (type locality, Dumaguete, Negros Oriental). These three species were later placed in *Stiphodon* by Herre (1934). These were the first reports of the genus *Stiphodon* from the Philippines.

Watson & Kottelat (1995) reviewed the taxonomy of *Stiphodon* from the Philippines with specimens collected from Leyte. They re-described *Stiphodon atropurpureus* (Herre) and assigned *M. formosum* as a junior synonym of *S. atropurpureus*. They also described two new species: *Stiphodon olivaceus* Watson & Kottelat and *S. sarrufus* Watson & Kottelat; Leyte is the type locality for both species. Maeda *et al.* (2012a) re-described *Stiphodon pulchellus* (Herre) and designated *S. olivaceus* as a junior synonym of *S. pulchellus*. Thus, three valid species of *Stiphodon* are currently known from the Philippines: *S. atropurpureus*, *S. pulchellus*, and *S. sarrufus*.

Palawan is an island in the western Philippines, and located between the South China and Sulu Seas. One specimen of *S. pulchellus* collected from Palawan was included in the material examined for the re-description of this species (Maeda *et al.*, 2012a). To the best of our knowledge, this was the only report of *Stiphodon* from Palawan. We conducted a survey of freshwater and estuarine fish at three sites on Palawan in May, 2015, and found four *Stiphodon* species, including an undescribed species. This undescribed species was also found in collections of the National Museum of Nature and Science, Ibaraki, Japan (NSMT), the General Research Center of Okinawa