

Oxymetopon compressus, a New Eleotrid Fish from Hong Kong*

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In January, 1963, a small fish of the Eleotridae with a brilliant colour pattern was collected by the author on board the FV/Yuen Ling (of the Fisheries Division, Agriculture and Fisheries Department, Hong Kong) at the entrance to the Taitam Bay, Hong Kong.

The identification of this fish reveals that it is a member of the monotypic genus *Oxymetopon* BLEEKER, 1861. This generic allocation is based primarily on KOUMANS (1953). Other pertinent references which have also been used are GÜNTHER (1861) and SMITH (1958). *Oxymetopon compressus*, the new name herein proposed to represent this Eleotrid fish, has typical characters of the genus. The most prominent feature is the very compressed, ribbon-like shape with a scaly, fleshy keel medio-dorsally in front of the first dorsal fin on the head. Another pertinent distinguishing generic character is the conspicuously pointed lanceolate caudal fin. The meristic counts of the fins, the presence of ctenoid scales on the body and of cycloid scales in front of the first dorsal fin, the shape of the gill opening, and the presence of canine teeth, agree also with the diagnosis of *Oxymetopon* (KOUMANS, 1953: 382; GÜNTHER, 1861: 153). From the type of the genus, *O. typus* BLEEKER, *O. compressus* differs in a number of characters, which are listed and compared in the following simple key.

Key to the species of *Oxymetopon*

- 1a. Head with a very conspicuous concavity in front of the eye; spines of first dorsal long, about equal to depth of body; depth of body 5.3 in standard length; length of caudal fin 3.3 in standard length; anal rays I, 31. (KOUMANS, 1953: 373, fig. 93)..... *O. typus* BLEEKER
- 1b. Head profile smoothly rounded, without any concavity; spines of first dorsal shorter, much less than depth of body; depth of body 4.3 (or 22.3%) in standard length; length of caudal fin 2.7 (or 37.7%) in standard length; anal rays I, 29. (Fig. 1)..... *O. compressus*, sp. nov.

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Oxymetopon compressus sp. nov.

Fig. 1

Holotype.—BMNH 1965.11.6.2, 66.4 mm in standard length, sex ?, collected at Taitam Bay, about 1,500 yards NW of Beaufort Island, Lemma Channel, Hong Kong, and by the author on board the FV/YUEN NING in January, 1963; sea-bed of a soft mud, and depth from 8 to 9 fathoms.

Diagnosis.—An Eleotridae fish having a lanceolate caudal fin and a strongly compressed body and head, the latter of which forming a scaly, fleshy keel mediodorsally in front of the first dorsal fin. It is also distinguished by the characters listed in the key.

Description.—D₁ VI; D₂ I, 30; A I, 29; P 20; V I, 4. Branchiostegal rays 5.

The following measurements are expressed as percentages of the standard length. Length of head 18.9. Greatest depth of body at hind base of first dorsal 22.3; least depth of caudal peduncle 11.3. From tip of snout to origin of first dorsal 24.1, to origin of second dorsal 45.2, to origin of anal 51.2, to origin of pectoral 20.2, to origin of pectoral 20.2, and to origin of ventral 26.2. Base of first dorsal, measured from first to sixth ray, 13.6; length of second ray (second to fifth subequal) 12.0. Base of second dorsal 46.7; length of fourth ray 13.6. Base of anal 41.9; length of third ray 9.0. Length of pectoral 18.1. Length of ventral (to tip of filamentous third ray) 17.3. Length of caudal 37.7.

The following measurements are expressed as percentages of the head length.

Length of snout 22.2. Diameter of eye 31.8. Postorbital length 47.9. Interorbital length 22.2. Length of upper jaw 43.7.

A strongly compressed fish with smooth dorsal and ventral profiles. Head with a fleshy keel mediodorsally. Two nasal openings immediately in front of head. Three pore-like sensory openings: one in front near tip of snout; another above the eye; and a third one close behind eye. Mouth steeply oblique, its hind end not

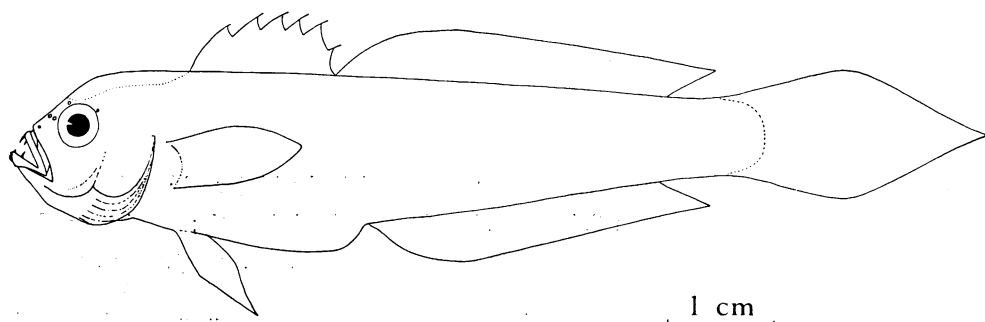


Fig. 1. The holotype of *Oxymetopon compressus*.

reaching a vertical through front of eye. Scales partly fallen off, numerous, ctenoid on body and cycloid in front of first dorsal in nape region. Head completely scaleless. Scales extending onto greater part of caudal, but absent on other fins.

Teeth pointed, in narrow bands of 2 or 3 rows in both jaws; outer row distinctly larger. Canines present, two pairs in each jaw.

First dorsal low, joined to second dorsal by a very low membrane. Second dorsal and anal similar in form, both with a pointed tip to their upper hind corner. Caudal conspicuously pointed, lanceolate. Pectoral broadly rounded. Ventral with third branched ray elongate, somewhat filamentous.

Colour.—The following colour pattern is based on colour notes taken while the fish was still alive.

Head light yellowish brown, with three lateral light iridescent blue bars: the first from tip of snout through eye to above upper end of gill opening; the second from middle of jaw passing below eye to upper end of gill opening; the third from corner of mouth to end of gill cover at level through middle of base of pectoral. Upper and lower borders of eye each with a light pinkish red spot. Fleshy keel medio-dorsally on head being of a light red with a touch of iridescent hue.

Body of a very pale brownish white, with three very light, but distinctly observable whitish pink patches on belly: the first medioventrally right behind isthmus; the second below middle of pectoral; the third medioventrally in front of anus. A very light iridescent greyish blue area along base of anal on body. A spot of iridescent red at upper end of base of pectoral.

First dorsal with a light red upper border, and many whitish blue streaks running obliquely backwards. Second dorsal with a broad yellowish brown margin, and whitish blue streaks as in first dorsal.

Anal uniformly yellowish brown with a touch of light red, bordered at its base and margin by a fine, light grey-blue.

Caudal of a light whitish blue ground colour, with a patch of brown at its upper rays and a patch of red at its lower rays; these patches linked by a number of very fine light yellow vertical lines.

Paired fins uniformly translucent with a touch of white, with exception of a patch of light pinkish red medially on ventral.

References

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