

Two New Species and Two New Records of Aploactinid Fishes (Pisces: Scorpaeniformes) from Australia

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ABSTRACT. Two new species of aploactinids are described from coastal waters of subtropical eastern Australia. *Pseudopataecus taenianotus*, new genus and species, is described from seven specimens trawled inside the Capricorn-Bunker Group, Queensland. It is readily distinguished from other aploactinids by the markedly compressed head and body, large number of dorsal and anal-fin ray elements, frontal bone with laterally-bowed ridges forming a shallow fleshy depression, and distinctly anterior insertion of the first dorsal spine. *Cocotropus microps*, new species, is described from three specimens collected from inshore waters of southern Queensland and northern New South Wales. It has the lowest dorsal- and anal-fin ray counts of the genus, dorsal fin forming three elevated sections, and coloration including at least several small pale irregular spots or larger blotches.

Two aploactinid species are recorded in Australian waters for the first time. *Acanthosphex leurynnis* Jordan & Seale, 1905, previously known from Hong Kong, Gulf of Thailand, southeast India, Indonesia and eastern Papua New Guinea, is reported from the Cumberland Group in tropical eastern Australia, Arafura Sea, Northern Territory, and near Perth, Western Australia. *Xenaploactis cautes* Poss & Eschmeyer, 1980, previously known only from the Andaman Sea and Gulf of Thailand, is reported from off Dampier, northwestern Australia and Gulf of Carpentaria, Queensland.

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With the addition of the two new taxa described here, the Aploactinidae (velvetfishes) now contains 42 species belonging to 18 genera (Table 1), 11 of which are monotypic (Poss & Eschmeyer, 1978, 1979, 1980; Poss, 1982, 1986, 1999; Poss & Springer, 1983; Washington *et al.*, 1984; Poss & Allen, 1987; Poss & Johnson, 1991; Eschmeyer, 1998; Imamura & Shinohara, 2003). The family is restricted to the western Pacific and Indian oceans, and most species occur solely in the Australian and Indo-Malaysian regions. Including the two species recorded here for the first time, 20 species in 14 genera are now known from Australian waters. Most species appear to live among vegetation, or rocky, shelly, coral rubble, or coralline algae substrata. Velvetfishes are most commonly collected from among prawn trawl bycatch.

Collections from scallop trawling inside the Capricorn-Bunker Group of subtropical eastern Australia have yielded a distinctive new genus and species of aploactinid fish. It appears to be highly restricted in distribution, with no other specimens collected throughout the Australian region, despite numerous trawl surveys covering similar depth ranges and habitat.

A new species of the genus *Cocotropus* is also described, expanding the largest genus of velvetfishes to 10 species: *C. echinatus* (Cantor, 1849) from Malaysia, *C. dermacanthus* (Bleeker, 1852) from Indonesia and the Seychelles, *C. roseus* Day, 1875 from the Coromandel coast of India and the Maldives, *C. altipinnis* Waite, 1903 from Lord Howe and Kermadec Islands, *C. monacanthus* (Gilchrist, 1906)