

A New Genus with Two New Species of Live-Bearing Brotulas (Teleostei: Ophidiiformes: Bythitidae) from Southern Australia

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A new genus, *Anacanthobythites*, is proposed for two previously unknown species of live-bearing brotulas collected in temperate Australia. The first, *A. platycephalus* sp. nov., is based on a single male taken in Lucky Bay, Western Australia. The second, *A. tasmaniensis* sp. nov., is based on two males taken off Port Davey, Tasmania. The new genus is characterized mainly by a depressed head; seven branchiostegal rays; the first branchial arch without developed gill rakers; the anteriormost anal fin ray located below dorsal rays 19–22; and the absence of palatine teeth, an opercular pore, and a pseudobranch. In most respects, both members of the new genus resemble species of *Grammonus* Gill, 1896 or *Microbrotula* Gosline, 1953.

Key Words: Teleostei, Ophidiiformes, Bythitidae, *Anacanthobythites*, new genus, new species, Australia.

Introduction

As part of current studies on the live-bearing brotula subfamily Bythitinae, the author received from Australia three specimens originally thought to belong to the genus *Microbrotula* Gosline, 1953. Two specimens representing a hitherto undescribed species were collected on a rocky reef off Port Davey, Tasmania. The third specimen, also representing an undescribed species, was collected at a reef outcrop in Lucky Bay, Western Australia, part of Cape Le Grand National Park. All three specimens were taken at SCUBA poison stations by Dr Barry Hutchins of the Western Australian Museum, Perth. The new specimens differ from species of the genus *Microbrotula* chiefly in their head-pore patterns and the absence of both developed gill rakers on the first branchial arch and palatine teeth. The three specimens share numerous characters with species of *Grammonus* Gill, 1896, but differ from that genus chiefly by the depressed head, the first branchial arch without developed gill rakers, the lack of a pseudobranch (except *G. thielei* Nielsen and Cohen, 2004, which also lacks a pseudobranch), and the presence of seven branchiostegal rays. Accordingly, they are placed in a new genus described herein.