

New Records of the Dwarf Scorpionfish, *Sebastapistes fowleri*
(Actinopterygii: Scorpaeniformes: Scorpaenidae), from East
Asia, and Notes on Australian Records of the Species

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Twenty specimens of the smallest known scorpionfish, *Sebastapistes fowleri* (Pietschmann, 1934), collected from Taiwan and the Ryukyu Islands and recently found in museum collections, represent the first records of *S. fowleri* from East Asia. The Philippines and Guam were previously regarded as the northernmost records of the species. In addition, 15 specimens of *S. fowleri* from the Timor, Coral, and Tasman Seas are also reported, these being the first records from Australian waters. The Tasman Sea represents a new southernmost range extension.

Key Words: Teleostei, Scorpaenidae, *Sebastapistes fowleri*, Japan, Taiwan, Australia, first records.

Introduction

The smallest Indo-Pacific scorpionfish, *Sebastapistes fowleri*, was originally described as *Scorpaena fowleri* by Pietschmann (1934) on the basis of three specimens from the Hawaiian Islands. Since its subsequent redescription by Pietschmann (1938), who changed the generic allocation to *Scorpaenodes* Bleeker, 1857, the species was not regarded as a valid species until Randall (1973) listed it (as a member of *Scorpaenopsis* Heckel, 1840) from Tahiti. Eschmeyer and Randall (1975) also regarded the species as a valid member of *Scorpaenopsis* and designated a lectotype for *Scorpaena fowleri*.

The species has been treated as *Scorpaenopsis fowleri* by many subsequent authors (e.g., Myers 1988; Winterbottom et al. 1989; Poss 1999; Randall 1999) because it lacks palatine teeth and this lack is a diagnostic character of that genus; however, several authors (e.g., Kosaki et al. 1991; Randall and Anderson 1993; Kulbicki et al. 1994; Randall 1996) have questioned this generic allocation. Recently, Randall and Poss (2002) redescribed the species in detail, on the basis of specimens representing a wide distributional range, and reassigned it to *Sebastapistes* Gill in Streets, 1877. Since all other known species of *Sebastapistes* possess palatine teeth, Randall and Poss (2002) considered that loss of palatine teeth in *S. fowleri* had occurred independently from that in *Scorpaenopsis*. They suggested that *S. fowleri* is closest to *Sebastapistes strongia* (Cuvier in Cuvier and Valenciennes, 1829), the type species of *Sebastapistes*.