

## First Records of a Scorpionfish, *Scorpaenodes albaiensis*, from East Asia, with a Synopsis of *S. minor* (Actinopterygii: Scorpaeniformes: Scorpaenidae)

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The Indo-Pacific scorpionfish *Scorpaenodes albaiensis* (Evermann and Seale, 1907), for which the Philippines was previously the northernmost record, is recorded from East Asia (Taiwan and Japan) for the first time on the basis of 16 specimens. Specimens from Taiwan and Japan previously identified as *S. minor* (Smith, 1958) are shown to include the closely related species *S. albaiensis* as well. The East Asian specimens of *S. albaiensis* are described, and comparisons of the two species are made on the basis of Indo-Pacific specimens.

**Key Words:** Teleostei, Scorpaenidae, *Scorpaenodes albaiensis*, *Scorpaenodes minor*, Japan, Taiwan, new records.

### Introduction

*Scorpaenodes albaiensis* (Evermann and Seale, 1907) was originally described as a new genus and species, *Hypomacrus albaiensis*, on the basis of two specimens from the Philippines. Subsequently, Smith (1958) described the closely related *Hypomacrus minor* Smith, 1958 based on 30 specimens from Mozambique. Both species share the following characters not otherwise seen in the genus *Scorpaenodes* Bleeker, 1857: middle rays of the pectoral fins abruptly longer than those immediately above, and nasal spines absent (Eschmeyer 1986; Poss 1999). Two other nominal species, *Hypomacrus africanus* Smith, 1958 and *H. brocki* Schultz, Woods and Lachner, 1966, were subsequently synonymized with *H. albaiensis* and *H. minor* respectively (Eschmeyer 1986). Eschmeyer (1969) regarded the genus *Hypomacrus* Evermann and Seale, 1907 (characterized by the two features mentioned above) as representing a species group within *Scorpaenodes*, whereas Mandrytsa (2001) believed *Hypomacrus* to be a valid sister genus of a clade comprising *Hoplosebastes* Schmidt, 1929 and *Scorpaenodes* on the basis of a morphological phylogenetic analysis. Much of the latter hypothesis, including the phylogenetic position of *Scorpaenodes*, was at odds with that subsequently proposed by Imamura (2004). The validity of *Hypomacrus* should be re-assessed on the basis of further