

Epigonus merleni, a Junior Synonym of *Epigonus macrops* (Actinopterygii: Perciformes: Epigonidae)

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Epigonus merleni McCosker and Long, 1997 was originally described on the basis of a single specimen collected from the Galápagos Islands. It was considered to be distinguished from *E. macrops* (Brauer, 1906) by having 11+14 vertebrae and 57 lateral-line scales, but our examination of the holotype of *E. merleni* revealed that it actually has 10+15 vertebrae and 48+5 lateral-line scales. The holotype also has a luminescent window near the pelvic-fin base that is otherwise unique to *E. macrops* in the genus. Based on our comparison of the holotype of *E. merleni* with a syntype and other specimens of *E. macrops*, we conclude that *E. merleni* is a junior synonym of *E. macrops*.

Key Words: Teleostei, deepwater cardinalfish, *Epigonus*, synonymy.

Introduction

Epigonus merleni McCosker and Long, 1997 was originally described from a single specimen collected on the sea surface during the 1995 eruption of Fernandina Volcano in the Galápagos Islands. According to McCosker and Long (1997), this species belongs to the “*E. telescopus* group” (*sensu* Abramov 1992) in having eight spines on the first dorsal fin. McCosker and Long (1997) distinguished their new species from the other four species of the group by its five pyloric caeca, 17 pectoral-fin rays, nine soft rays in the second dorsal fin, and 11+14 vertebrae. Our examination of the type specimen of *E. merleni* revealed that the original description did not accurately report several important characters. Comparison with other congeners has subsequently led us to conclude that *E. merleni* is a junior synonym of *Epigonus macrops* (Brauer, 1906).

Materials and Methods

Methods for enumerating meristic and morphometric characters follow Mayer (1974) except for body depth and body width, for which we follow the definitions of Okamoto (2011). Missing lateral-line scales were estimated by counting scale pockets. The number of pored lateral-line scales on the caudal fin is represented as “+*n*”. Definition of the first caudal vertebra follows Okamoto and Motomura (2011). Counts of vertebrae and ribs were taken from radiographs. The presence of a ventral luminescent window, the number of pyloric caeca, and sex were established by dissection of the abdomen on the right side. Standard length is

abbreviated as SL. Institutional abbreviations for the depositories of the examined specimens are: AMS, Australian Museum, Sydney; CAS, California Academy of Sciences, San Francisco; HUMZ, Hokkaido University Museum, Hakodate; MCZ, Museum of Comparative Zoology, Harvard University, Cambridge; NSMT, National Museum of Nature and Science, Tsukuba; TCWC, Texas A&M University, College Station, Texas; USNM, Smithsonian Institution National Museum of Natural History, Suitland; and ZMB, Ichthyologisches Museum, Museum für Naturkunde, Berlin.

Material examined. *Epigonus macrops* (13 specimens): ZMB 17678, syntype, 202.5 mm SL, 03°22'01"S, 101°11'05"E, western coast of Sumatra, Indonesia, eastern Indian Ocean, 903 m depth, 21 January 1899; CAS 86581, holotype of *E. merleni*, 139.1 mm SL, 00°28'S, 91°37'W, surface offshore of Cabo Hammond, Isla Fernandina, Galápagos Islands, eastern Pacific, February 1995; AMS I. 22814-018, 131.6 mm SL, 18°48'00"S, 116°60'00"E, northwest of Port Headland, Australia, Indian Ocean, 704 m depth, 6 April 1982; AMS I. 31161-004, 170.5 mm SL, 24°53'67"S, 111°80'83"E, off Cape Cuvier, Australia, Indian Ocean, 901 m depth, 28 January 1991; CSIRO H 2562-01, 178.4 mm SL, 24°28'S, 111°51'E, west of Quobba Point, Australia, Indian Ocean, 905 m depth, 28 January 1991; CSIRO H 6575-08, 126.8 mm SL, 14°35'S, 121°21'E, northwest of Cape Leveque, Australia, Indian Ocean, 709 m depth, 26 June 2007; MCZ 48827, 148.7 mm SL, 11°54'N, 69°18'W, Caribbean Sea, 910 m depth, 4 October 1963; TCWC 6372.09, 4 specimens, 103.7–145.6 mm SL, 27°64'N, 91°53'W, Gulf of Mexico, 731 m depth, 3 March 1986; TCWC 7003.10, 2 specimens 120.6–156.7 mm SL, 27°14'N, 93°39'W, Gulf of Mexico, 792–864 m depth, 8 April 1986.

Comparative materials. *Epigonus angustifrons*