First Record of the Rockfish *Sebastes melanops* from the Western North Pacific, with Comments on its Synonymy (Osteichthyes: Scorpaenoidei: Sebastidae)

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*Sebastes melanops* Girard, 1856, formerly known from the Aleutian Islands and the southeastern Bering Sea to Baja California, USA, is reported from the western Pacific on the basis of two specimens collected from Iwate Prefecture on the Pacific coast of northern Japan. One of the Japanese specimens is described here in detail and compared with specimens from the eastern North Pacific. Sequence data from the mitochondrial DNA control region of this species are also provided and compared with closely related congeners.

*Sebastes columbianus* (Hubbs and Schultz, 1933) is herein regarded as a junior synonym of *S. melanops* on the basis of an examination of type specimens. Conversely, another supposed junior synonym, *S. simulans* (Gill, 1864) may not be conspecific with *S. melanops*.

**Key Words:** Teleostei, Actinopterygii, distribution, mitochondrial DNA, *Sebastes columbianus*, *Sebastes simulans*.

**Introduction**

The rockfish genus *Sebastes* Cuvier, 1829 is the most species-rich genus in the Sebastidae, containing over 110 species (Nelson 2006) characterized by having a round pectoral fin, 13–15 dorsal-fin spines, and a posteriorly pointed suborbital stay that is not strongly connected with the preopercle (Matsubara 1943). In Japanese waters, 33 species are now recognized as valid (Kai and Nakabo 2013; Nakabo and Kai 2013).

*Sebastes melanops* Girard, 1856, formerly known from the Aleutian Islands and the southeastern Bering Sea to Baja California, USA, is reported from the western Pacific on the basis of two specimens collected from Iwate Prefecture on the Pacific coast of northern Japan. One of the Japanese specimens is described here in detail and compared with specimens from the eastern North Pacific. Sequence data from the mitochondrial DNA control region of this species are also provided and compared with closely related congeners. *Sebastes columbianus* (Hubbs and Schultz, 1933) is herein regarded as a junior synonym of *S. melanops* on the basis of an examination of type specimens. Conversely, another supposed junior synonym, *S. simulans* (Gill, 1864) may not be conspecific with *S. melanops*.

**Materials and Methods**

Methods of counts and measurements generally follow Kai and Nakabo (2008). “Body depth 1” is the distance between the origins of the first dorsal-fin spine and the pelvic-fin spine; “body depth 2” is the distance between the origins of the last dorsal-fin spine and the first anal-fin spine. The last two soft rays of both the dorsal and anal fins were counted as single rays, each pair being associated with a single pterygiophore. Terminology of the head spines fol-