

A New Cucumberfish (Paraulopidae) of the *Paraulopus nigripinnis* Complex from Central Eastern Australia

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ABSTRACT. A new species of cucumberfish, *Paraulopus melanogrammus*, is described from upper slope depths of southern Queensland and northern New South Wales in the western Tasman Sea. It is distinguishable from other members of the *P. nigripinnis* complex, with which it shares 4.5–5.5 scales above the lateral line, the presence of supraocular ridges and a large maximum size, by a combination of characters, including a distinctive black leading edge along the full anterior margin of the dorsal fin of adults. In juveniles, the black margin is broken by a pale space midway along the fin.

GOMON, MARTIN F., & TOMOYASU SATO, 2004. A new cucumberfish (Paraulopidae) of the *Paraulopus nigripinnis* complex from central eastern Australia. *Records of the Australian Museum* 56(2): 195–199.

A study by Sato & Nakabo (2001) of species long placed in the genus *Chlorophthalmus* Bonaparte, 1840 identified two evolutionarily separate assemblages, a world-wide group comprising 17 species, which includes the type species of the genus *C. agassizi* Bonaparte, 1840, and an Indo-Pacific group with eight named species, for which they erected the genus *Paraulopus* and family *Paraulopidae*. Only two of the eight species of *Paraulopus* had been described or reliably recorded from the Australasian region, the Australian and New Zealand *P. nigripinnis* (Günther, 1878) and the New Caledonian *P. legandi* (Fourmanoir & Rivaton, 1979). Sato & Nakabo (2002) subsequently described two new species, *P. okamurai* and *P. novaeseelandiae* from New Zealand and eastern Australia and related them to *P.*

nigripinnis in sharing 4.5–5.5 scales above the lateral line, supraocular ridges and a large maximum size, rather than the 2.5–3.5 scales above the lateral line, absence of supraocular ridges and rather small maximum body size in the remaining seven species. The authors also proposed the use of the vernacular 'cucumberfish' for representatives of the family. The recognition of another two species *P. n.sp. 1* and *P. n.sp. 2* (Sato *et al.*, submitted for publication) from southern and western Australia, respectively, brought to five the number of Australasian *Paraulopus* spp.

The purpose of this paper is to describe yet another Australian species belonging to this group, which occurs in upper slope waters of central and southern Queensland and northern New South Wales.