

NOTE ON THE GENUS GOBIOMORUS.

BY THEODORE GILL.

In 1800 Comte de Lacépède, in his *Histoire Naturelle des Poissons* (vol. 2, p. 583), proposed a genus under the name *Gobiomorus* for four species of fishes. The genus was simply defined as having the ventral fins not united, two dorsal fins, the head small, the eyes approximated, and the opercula attached for the great part of their margin. The species referred to it belong to the four genera—*Nomeus*, *Valenciænnea*, *Philypnus*, and *Periophthalmus*. These genera were distinguished in the following order:

In 1801, *Periophthalmus*, by Bloch & Schneider.

In 1817, *Nomeus*, by Cuvier.

In 1837, *Philypnus*, by Valenciennes.

In 1856, *Valenciænnea*, by Bleeker.

In 1883 Professor Jordan, in the Proceedings of the U. S. National Museum (vol. 5, p. 571), has proposed to restrict the name *Gobiomorus* to *Philypnus*. He remarks of the name: "It has not as yet been restricted by any author so far as we know. It seems to us best to consider as the type of *Gobiomorus*, *G. dormitator* Lacépède, and therefore to use the name *Gobiomorus* instead of *Philypnus*. A serious practical objection to the consideration of *taiboa* (*strigatus*) as the type of *Gobiomorus* lies in the uncertainty whether this species is really congeneric with *Eleotris gyrinus* (which species must, we think, as "*Eleotris pisonis*" be considered the type of *Eleotris*). In Bleeker's system, *strigatus* is made the type of a distinct genus (*Valenciænnea* Bleeker) and placed at a distance from *Eleotris*, but no diagnostic features of importance have been made known by which it may be distinguished."

The reasons assigned do not appear to be sufficient for a restriction of the name *Gobiomorus* to *Philypnus*. As has been already shown, *Gobiomorus* was a very heterogeneous genus, and not by itself deserving of any consideration. Of course, however, the principles of nomenclature compel us to do something with it. Inasmuch as the genera *Periophthalmus*, *Nomeus*, and *Philypnus* had already been properly constituted, there is no reason why those names should not be retained. The only species for which *Gobiomorus* could therefore be used as a generic designation is the *taiboa*. This is considered by Professor Jordan to be perhaps, if not probably, a species of *Eleotris*, the genus *Valenciænnea* not being regarded as well distinguished. To the present writer, however, the genus *Valenciænnea* seems to be entirely deserving of

generic differentiation from *Eleotris*, and inasmuch as the name is prior to *Valenciennea* it should be retained for it. If, however, the group is not regarded as being generically distinct from *Eleotris*, the question may arise whether its name or *Eleotris* shall be adopted. At any rate it is inadvisable, for the present at least, to apply it to the genus *Philypnus*, and that genus should retain the long honored name which it has enjoyed until its use was contested by Professor Jordan.