

DESCRIPTION OF A NEW SPECIES OF ROCKFISH,
SEBASTICHTHYS BREVISPINIS, FROM ALASKA.

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IN 1882 Capt. Henry E. Nichols, of the U. S. Navy, made a collection of fishes in Alaska and British Columbia for the U. S. National Museum. A catalogue of the species obtained by him was published in these Proceedings,* and among the number is a rockfish (No. 32004, U.S.N.M.) from Hassler Harbor. In the catalogue referred to the species was named "*Sebastichthys proriger*, Jordan and Gilbert, subspecies *brevispinis*, nov." After comparison with *S. proriger* it was found to differ from that form in having the peritoneum white and the second anal spine shorter than the third.

The next notice of the fish was published by Dr. D. S. Jordan in 1884.† In that notice it was mentioned as a distinct species, with reference to the differential characters first brought to notice by the present writer.

This species is fully distinguished from *S. proriger* and other known forms of the genus, and may be characterized as follows:

SEBASTICHTHYS BREVISPINIS, BEAN.

Sebastichthys proriger subspecies *brevispinis*, BEAN, Proc. U. S. Nat. Mus., VI, p. 359, 1883.

The type of the species is No. 32004, U.S.N.M., the specimen being 370 millimeters (14½ inches) in length, including the caudal fin.

In spirits the back is pale rusty brown; the sides below the lateral line are paler; the belly is whitish. Traces of dark color on the membrane of the spinous dorsal; the soft dorsal, pectorals, ventrals, and anal pale. Some traces of brownish on the caudal membranes.

Body elongate, compressed, its greatest height two-sevenths of the length without caudal; its greatest width one-third length of head. The caudal peduncle is short, its least depth five-sixths of its length from end of soft dorsal to base of middle caudal rays. The head is similar to that of *S. proriger* in shape, its length being contained two and two-thirds times in total without caudal.

* Proc. U. S. Nat. Mus., VI, 1883, pp. 353-361.

† Rept. U. S. Commr. of Fish and Fisheries, 1884, p. 107.

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Cranial ridges almost obsolete, except on the occiput, where the spines are long and depressed, nearly as long as the eye. Preocular and supraocular spines present; no tympanic spines.

Mouth large, the broadly expanded maxillary reaching beyond the middle of the eye. The length of the upper jaw (intermaxilla and maxilla) almost one half length of head. The lower jaw much projecting, its length equaling that of eye and postorbital part of head. The upper half of the maxilla is covered with very fine scales; the mandible also has fine scales along its middle and posterior portions. The mandible has a well-developed knob at the symphysis. The eye is three-fourths as long as the snout, rather more than one-fifth the length of the head, and about equal to the width of the nearly flat interorbital space. The width of the preorbital is less than one-half the length of the eye. The preopercular spines are short and sharp; the second longest, about one-third as long as the eye; the first, fourth, and fifth very small; the points of the fourth and fifth are directed obliquely downward and backward. The gillrakers are moderately long and slender; eleven above and twenty-three below the angle, the longest at the angle one-half as long as the snout or two-thirds as long as the eye. The scales are small—eighty-six or eighty-seven rows in a longitudinal series, only fifty-one of which are pierced by tubes.

The spinous dorsal is low, the first spine two thirds as long as the second and rather more than two-thirds as long as the eye; the fourth to the sixth spines longest, rather more than one-third length of head. The membrane of the soft dorsal and to some extent that of the spinous dorsal scaly. The longest soft ray of the dorsal is rather shorter than the longest spine; the last soft ray is as long as the first spine. The first anal spine is very short, two-fifths as long as the second, or one-half as long as the eye; the second spine is shorter and stouter than the third, equal to the snout in length; the third spine is nearly one and one-half times as long as the eye. The longest soft ray exceeds the length of the longest dorsal spine and is nearly equal to the postorbital part of the head. The pectorals are shaped very much as in *S. proriger*; the lower four or five rays are slightly exerted at the ends; the middle rays longest, slightly longer than the head without the postorbital part. The ventrals do not extend as far back as the pectorals; their distance from the vent equal to half their own length, which is two-fifths the length of head. Peritoneum silvery white.

D. XIII, 14; A. III, 7.

In *S. proriger* the second anal spine is distinctly longer than the third; the peritoneum is black; a tympanic spine is present; the gillrakers 40 in number and many of them club shaped at the end, the longest rather more than one-half the length of the eye; the fourth and fifth preopercular spines are directed horizontally backward, and the scales are in seventy-five rows. These comparisons are drawn from the type of *S. proriger*, No. 26980, U.S.N.M.