

Description of two new species of *Hetereleotris* (Gobiidae) from the south Pacific, with a revised key to species and synonymization of the genus *Pascua* with *Hetereleotris*

DOUGLASS F. HOESE¹ & HELEN K. LARSON²

¹Australian Museum, 6 College St., Sydney, NSW 2010, Australia; DougH@austmus.gov.au

²Museum and Art Gallery of the Northern Territory, G.P.O. Box 4646, Darwin, NT, 0801, Australia

Abstract

Two new species of the genus *Hetereleotris* are described from the south Pacific. One species is known only from reefs off southeastern Australia and the second from Rapa and Pitcairn islands. Both species are close to a species recently described from Easter Island in the genus *Pascua*. The Easter Island species is redescribed herein. Previously only one species of the genus was reported from the Pacific. All of the species described here share a number of characteristics suggesting that they form a monophyletic group, including: the flattened and elongate urogenital papilla of the males, modified basicaudal scales, posterior nostril a simple pore or with only a slightly elevated margin anteriorly, two papillae just behind the mental frenum and the reduced transverse papilla pattern.

Keywords: *Hetereleotris*, *Pascua*, Gobiidae, new species, south Pacific

Introduction

The gobiid genus *Hetereleotris* is speciose in the western Indian Ocean. Smith (1958) placed a number of species in *Monishia* or in various genera, now regarded by Akihito & Meguro (1981) and Hoese (1986) as junior synonyms of *Hetereleotris*. Hoese & Winterbottom (1979) treated some species from South Africa, while Hoese (1986) revised the genus and recognized 13 species and synonymized several nominal genera. Subsequently Gill (1998) described an additional species from Mauritius. The present paper describes two new species from the south Pacific and redescribes *Hetereleotris caudilinea* (Randall), in order to compare its characteristics with the two new taxa. Previously only a single species of *Hetereleotris* had been known from outside the Indian Ocean.