



Gollum suluensis sp. nov. (Carcharhiniformes: Pseudotriakidae), a new gollumshark from the southern Philippines

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Abstract

A second nominal species of the pseudotriakid genus *Gollum*, otherwise known as false catsharks or gollumsharks, is described on the basis of seven specimens collected from the Sulu Sea. *Gollum suluensis* sp. nov., was discovered at the Puerto Princesa fish market in Palawan during a project initiated by the World Wildlife Fund during the 1990s to investigate elasmobranch biodiversity in the Philippines. The genus *Gollum* is presently represented by a single nominal species *G. attenuatus* (Garrick), known from the outer continental shelf and upper slope adjacent New Zealand. *Gollum suluensis* differs from its congener in having a darker, plainer and less contrasted coloration, softer body, shorter and broader snout, smaller spiracle, larger pectoral fin, wider head, as well as larger proportions of the nostril, mouth and interorbital space. Based on their narrow and widely separated distributions, these sharks are probably relict species.

Key words: Pseudotriakidae, false catshark, *Gollum suluensis*, new species, Sulu Sea, Philippines

Introduction

In 1998, the Elasmobranch Biodiversity and Conservation Project was initiated by the World Wildlife Fund in collaboration with Silliman University Marine Laboratory (SUML), the States Polytechnic College of Palawan (SPCP) and the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR), to identify and recommend conservation and management actions to ensure sustainable elasmobranch fisheries in the rich Sulu Sea region of the Philippines. While this project obtained important fishery data, it also identified diversity “hot spots”, and provided baseline information on the composition of the fauna which was subsequently captured in a checklist of the sharks and rays of the Philippines (Compagno *et al.*, 2005b). During this project several new records and species were collected, including an undescribed shark of the genus *Gollum*.

The monotypic carcharhiniform genus *Gollum* was initially assigned to a new subfamily Golluminae of the family Proscylliidae (Compagno, 1988), and was later reassigned to the family Pseudotriakidae (Compagno, 1999, Compagno *et al.*, 2005a). It presently contains a single nominal species, *G. attenuatus* (Garrick, 1954), initially placed in *Triakis* (family Triakidae), which is endemic to the south-west Pacific off New Zealand where it occurs on the continental shelf and upper slope in 48–1250 m depth (Yano, 1993b). Our undescribed species, which is known on the basis of seven specimens obtained from a central fish market at Puerto Princesa (Palawan, western Philippines), is possibly endemic to the Sulu Sea. This species, along with a possible third member of the genus collected soon after off New Caledonia, were discussed by Compagno *et al.* (2005a). The new Philippine gollumshark is formally described below and a key is provided to the two species of the genus.