

NOTE:

***PONTINUS CLEMENSI* (PISCES: SCORPAENIDAE) AT  
MALPELO ISLAND, COLOMBIA: NEW SPECIMEN AND  
GEOGRAPHIC RANGE EXTENSION**

*Camilo Mora, Juan M. Jiménez, and Fernando A. Zapata*

**RESUMEN**

***Pontinus clemensi* (Pisces: Scorpaenidae) en la Isla Malpelo, Colombia: Nuevo espécimen y ampliación del ámbito geográfico.** *Pontinus clemensi* es una especie descrita con un reducido número de especímenes. En junio de 1999, un espécimen adicional de *P. clemensi* fue colectado en la isla Malpelo, Colombia (3° 59' N, 81° 35' W). Este ejemplar permitió ampliar la descripción original de la especie y su ámbito geográfico en el Pacífico Oriental.

**PALABRAS CLAVE:** *Pontinus*, rockfishes, Eastern Pacific.

*Pontinus clemensi* (Fitch, 1955) is a scorpaenid fish species described on the basis of a single specimen collected off the coast of the state of Nariño, Colombia (2° 25' N, 79° 00' W). An additional specimen was reported for Paita, Perú (Chirichigno, 1978), and two more for Gorgona Island, Colombia (Rubio *et al.*, 1987; Franke and Acero, 1996). There is also a photographic record for Fernandina Island in the Galápagos Islands (McCosker *et al.*, 1997). In June of 1999, aboard the "ARC Malpelo", we obtained an additional specimen of *P. clemensi* (27.5 cm SL) at Malpelo Island, Colombia (3° 59' N, 81° 35' W). The specimen was placed in the ichthyological reference collection of Universidad del Valle (CIRUV). This finding extends the geographic range of this species in the eastern Pacific and provides additional material to improve the description of this species.

***Pontinus clemensi* Fitch, 1955**

(Fig. 1)

**Material examined:** One specimen (CIRUV-99001) 275 mm SL, collected by an A.R.C. Malpelo crew member in front of "El Arrecife",

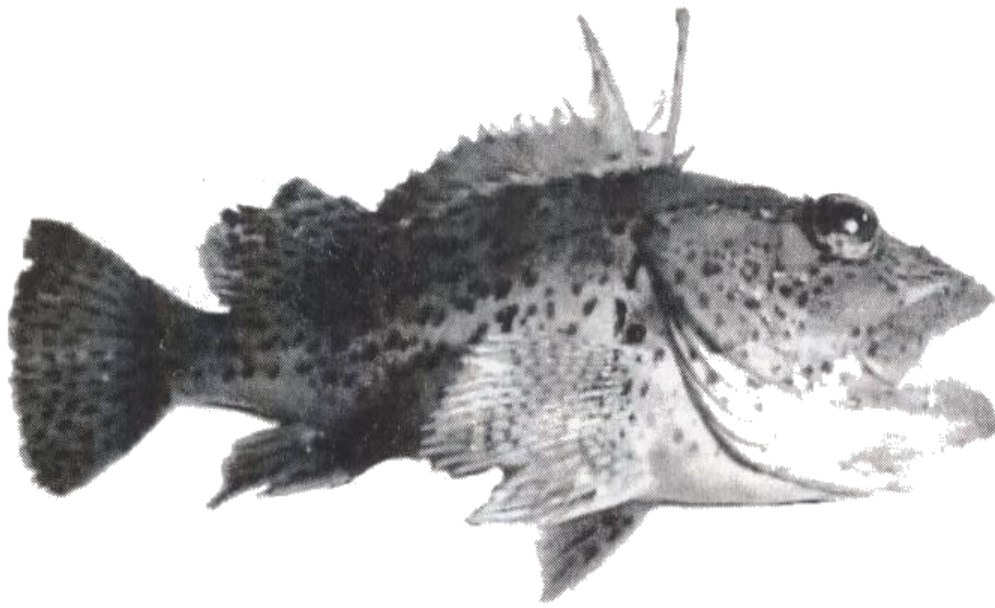


Figure 1. *Pontinus clemensi* (CIRUV 99001), 275 mm standard length, collected in front of “El Arrecife” at Malpelo island, Colombian Pacific Ocean.

Malpelo Island, Colombia, on 5 June 1999 with hook and line at 100 m depth.

**Description:** The meristic and morphometric characteristics of our specimen, and those of three other specimens known (Fitch, 1955; Chirichigno, 1978; Franke and Acero, 1994) are presented in table 1. Live coloration is red and orange with dark spots dorsally, pale without spots ventrally; in alcohol all the body is pale and the spots are dark brown (Fig. 1).

**Remarks:** Out of four previously reported specimens of *P. clemensi*, only three remain. The specimen reported by Rubio *et al.* (1987) appears to be lost. We also doubt the validity of this report for Gorgona Island: the poor illustration of this specimen (Rubio *et al.* 1987, Fig. 74) does not show the distinct color pattern of *P. clemensi*. Additionally, this specimen was reportedly collected between 14 and 18 m depth, which is unusually shallow for a species of *Pontinus*, and unfortunately, the meristic and morphometric characteristics of this specimen were not reported. We therefore compare the characteristics of the Malpelo Island specimen with those of only three other specimens (Fitch, 1955; Chirichigno, 1978; Franke and Acero, 1996).

Our Malpelo Island specimen shows all the diagnostic characteristics of *P. clemensi* (Fitch, 1955); however, some of the

characteristics of this specimen have values that are outside the ranges based on the three reported specimens. In particular, the Malpelo Island specimen has one additional soft ray in the anal fin, has a longer snout, the orbital diameter is smaller, and the body is more depressed and less compressed. Additionally, the maxilla, and the 4<sup>th</sup> dorsal and the 11<sup>th</sup> pectoral fin ray are shorter than in previously known specimens (Table 1). We believe that the relatively small differences observed between the Malpelo Island specimen and other specimens are likely to be explained by the small number of known specimens.

Unlike other congeners, *P. clemensi* appears to have a restricted geographic distribution (Poss, 1995). Because this species has always been collected at depths over 90 m, it could be argued that the geographic distribution of this species is poorly known because deep water species tend to be under-represented in fish surveys. However, other species of *Pontinus* typically have similar depth distributions (Poss, 1995), yet are

Table 1. Meristic and morphometric measurements of specimens of *Pontinus clemensi*. Morphometric measurements are expressed as percentage of standard length. Specimen 1: Holotype: Fitch (1955), 2: Chirichigno(1978), 3: Franke and Acero (1996), and 4: reported herein.

Character	SPECIMEN			
	1	2	3	4
Standard length (mm)	282	275	385	275
Dorsal fin elements	XI, I-9	XI, I-9	XI, I-10	XI, I-9
Anal fin elements	III-5	III-5	III-5	III-6
Pectoral fin elements	19	19	19	19
Head length	46.8	43.3	46.8	46.8
Snout length	15.2	15.0	11.7	16.3
Orbit diameter	8.1	7.6	8.8	7.2
Maxilla length	24.5	22.5	22.6	20.3
Interorbital width	6.6	5.8	5.2	6.2
Body depth	?	35.3	36.4	34.1
Body width	20.2	21.4	?	22.3
Caudal peduncle depth	10.6	9.4	?	10.2
Length 3 <sup>rd</sup> dorsal spine	22.0	17.4	23.6	19.5
Length 2 <sup>nd</sup> anal spine	15.2	14.5	12.5	14.2
Length 4 <sup>th</sup> dorsal ray	15.6	15.3	?	14.4
Length 11 <sup>th</sup> pectoral ray	24.8	25.8	26.5	24

widely distributed in the eastern Pacific Ocean. It is thus plausible that *P. clemensi* is a truly rare species.

### ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We thank the Armada Nacional de Colombia and the Ministerio del Medio Ambiente for allowing us to participate on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Scientific Expedition to Malpelo Island. Financial support for this work was provided by Colciencias. Captain Hernán Ospina and the A.R.C. Malpelo crew provided support to all the scientific activities on the island. We give special thanks to Sandra Bessudo, Director of the Santuario de Fauna y Flora Isla Malpelo, for her interest and work for the realization of this expedition. We thank all the expedition participants for their friendship and support during the trip.

### REFERENCES

- Chirichigno, N. 1978. Nuevas adiciones a la ictiofauna marina del Perú. Inf. Inst. Mar. Perú, 46: 1-109
- Fitch, J. E. 1955. *Pontinus clemensi*, a new scorpaenid fish from the tropical eastern Pacific. J. Wash. Acad. Sci., 45: 61-64.
- Franke, R. and A. Acero P. 1996. Peces óseos comerciales del Parque Gorgona, Pacífico colombiano (Osteichthyes: Muraenidae, Hemiramphidae, Belonidae, Scorpaenidae, Triglidae, Malacanthidae, Gerreidae, Sparidae, Kyphosidae, Sphyrnidae e Istiophoridae). Rev. Biol. Trop. 44: 763-770.
- McCosker, J. E.; G. Merlin; D. J. Long; R. G. Gilmore and C. Villon. 1997. Deepslope fishes collected during the 1995 eruption of isla Fernandina, Galápagos. Not. Galápagos, 58:22-26.
- Poss, S. 1995. Scorpaenidae. In: Fischer W, et al. (eds). Guía FAO para la identificación de especies para los fines de la pesca. Pacífico centro-oriental. Vol III., FAO Press., Roma, Italia.
- Rubio, E.; B. Gutiérrez. and R. Franke. 1987. Peces de la isla Gorgona. Universidad del Valle, Cali, Colombia. 315 p.

DATE RECEIVED: 08/05/00

DATE ACCEPTED: 03/10/00

#### AUTHOR'S ADDRESS:

Departamento de Biología, Universidad del Valle, A.A. 25360, Cali, Colombia.  
e-mails: moracamilo@hotmail.com (C.M.), jumajime@biologia.univalle.edu.co (J.M.J.),  
fazr@biologia.univalle.edu.co (F.A.Z.).