

***Schikhobalotrema pomacentri* (Digenea) In *Microspathodon chrysurus* (Osteichthyes) From Puerto Rico**

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ABSTRACT

Of eight yellowtail damselfish, *Microspathodon chrysurus*, (Cuvier and Valenciennes, 1830), collected from coastal waters of southwestern Puerto Rico, two from the vicinity of Enrique Reef, off La Parguera were infected with a haplosporidian digenean conspecific with *Schikhobalotrema pomacentri* (Manter, 1937) Skrjabin and Guschanskaja, 1955. This is the first report of this parasite in the northeastern Caribbean. This report and previous records suggest that *S. pomacentri* is a common digenean of damselfishes throughout the greater Caribbean region.

INTRODUCTION

While major contributions to our knowledge of the digeneans of marine fishes of Puerto Rico stem from the early studies of Cable (1954a,b,1956a,b), LeZotte (1954), Siddiqi and Cable(1960) and more recently Dyer et al. (1985,1986), our knowledge of these parasites in pomacentrid fish from this region is sparse. The present report is concerned with a digenean found in the yellowtail damselfish, *Microspathodon chrysurus* (Cuvier and Valenciennes), a pomacentrid fish of shallow water occurring either in coral heads with extensive caves, or in areas of

fire coral, *Millepora* spp., staghorn coral, *Acropora cervicornis* (Lamarck), and elkhorn coral, *A. palmata* (Lamarck) from near the surface to a depth of 7 to 10 meters and with a geographic distribution encompassing the entire greater Caribbean region including the Gulf of Mexico, near shore (Emery, 1978).

MATERIAL AND METHODS

Eight *Microspathodon chrysurus* were taken by means of spearfishing off the coastal waters of southwestern Puerto Rico between August 1974 and September 1989. Fishes were placed in plastic bags containing seawater and held in styrofoam containers for transport to the laboratory where they were refrigerated and usually necropsied immediately. Digenetic trematodes were washed in 0.7% saline, flattened with minimal coverslip pressure, fixed with warm AFA, and stored in 70% ethanol. Specimens were stained with Harris' hematoxylin and prepared as whole mounts in Canada balsam. The single specimen of *Schikhobalotrema pomacentri* has been deposited in the National Parasite Collection, USDA, Beltsville, Maryland and assigned accession number 81035.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Of 8 *Microspathodon chrysurus* examined from coastal water of southwestern Puerto Rico, 2 from the vicinity of Enrique Reef, off La Parguera was infected with a total of 5 haplosporidian digenean which are in agreement with the description of *Schikhobalotrema pomacentri* as given by Manter (1937). In a subsequent study, Manter (1947) found this species in 18 of 31 *Pomacentrus leucostictus* Muller and Troschel and in 3 of 13 *Pomacentrus xanthurus* Poey from Tortugas, Florida. Nahhas and Cable (1964) reported *Schikhobalotrema pomacentri* in *Pomacentrus analis* and *Pomacentrus leucostictus* from Curacao and from *Pomacentrus fuscus* Cuvier and *Microspathodon chrysurus* (Cuvier and Valenciennes) from Curacao and Jamaica. This digenean has also been reported in *Pomacentrus rectifraenum* Gill from the Galapagos Islands (Yamaguti, 1971).

The only report of digeneans in pomacentrid fish of Puerto Rico has been that of Dyer et al. (1985) in which *Abudefduf saxatilis* (Linnaeus) was infected with *Deretrema fusillus* Linton, 1940 and *Chromis multilineatus* (Guichenot) with *Lepocreadium trulla* (Linton, 1907). Pomacentrids found negative for digeneans included: *Abudefduf taurus* (Muller and Troschel), *Chromis cyaneus* (Poey), *Chromis insulatus* (Cuvier), *Pomacentrus fuscus* Cuvier, *Pomacentrus leucostictus* Muller and Troschel, *Pomacentrus mellis* Poey, *Pomacentrus partitus* Poey, *Pomacentrus planifrons* Cuvier and *Pomacentrus variabilis* (Castelnau).

The finding of *Schikhobalotrema pomacentri* in *Microspathodon chrysurus* from Puerto Rico is the first report of this digenean in the northeastern Caribbean. This report and previous records suggest that *S. pomacentri* is a common parasite of damselfishes throughout the greater Caribbean region.

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