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TWO NEW SCORPION FISHES FROM QUEENSLAND.

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(Figures 1-2.)

The use for the first time of prawn- and otter-trawls in southern Queensland bays in recent years has yielded some interesting fishes which escaped the notice of fishermen and naturalists employing more familiar methods of collecting. Perhaps the most remarkable-looking of these novelties are the various Scorpion Fishes which lurk amongst rocks or weeds, resembling their surroundings, and provided with venomous spines for attack or defence. These Scorpaenidae may be very local in distribution and are specialised, or even grotesque, in shape.

Through the courtesy of the Secretary and Chief Administration Officer of the Department of Harbours and Marine, Brisbane (Mr. E. Coulter) and the Government Ichthyologist (Mr. T. C. Marshall), I have been enabled to examine and report upon two very interesting specimens which are evidently new to science, and which are accordingly named below.

Family SCORPAENIDAE.

Peristrominus, gen. nov.

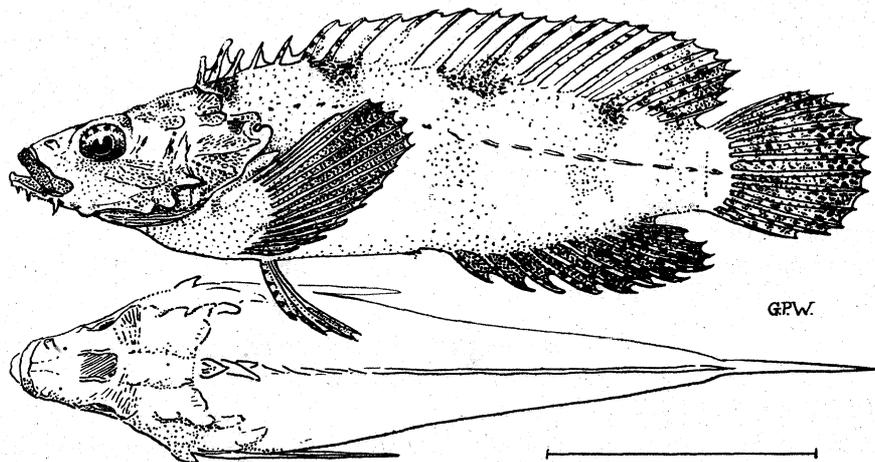
Orthotype, *P. dolosus*, sp. nov.

A genus of Scorpion Fishes with the head armoured with rugose bones without sharp spines; the body scaleless, papillose. Less than eight dorsal spines. All fin-rays simple. No free pectoral rays. V. i, 3. The dorsal fin begins well behind the level of the eyes.

The foregoing characters differentiate the new genus from others in the family, but the position of the first dorsal origin suggests that it is intermediate between Scorpaenidae and Aploactidae.

Latin *peristroma*, a carpet, and *Minous*, a related genus of fishes.

Peristrominus dolosus, sp. nov.



(Figure 1.)

D. iii/iv, 17. A. 11. P. 13. V. i, 3. C. 13. L.lat. with 16 or 17 tubes.

Three stumpy, papillose barbels on each side of chin, enclosing two small ones behind a median pit. Mouth terminal, oblique, small, lips thick and papillose, not quite reaching eye. Broad pads of velvet-like teeth in jaws and perhaps on vomer, but so weak as to be imperceptible. Breadth of head subequal to predorsal length, greater than depth of head, the latter being conic, depressed above and below, with swollen cheeks, all stoutly armoured with rugose bones. Two blunt preopercular, two opercular and one humeral spine on each side, otherwise the head lacks spines or ridges, having only bony bosses, a pitted suborbital stay, and entire preorbital. Middle of interorbital with a sunken, naked, rectangular depression. Nape not excavated like a saddle. Eyes oval, superolateral. Anterior nostril with prominent cup-shaped rim; posterior one a simple pore. Gill-membranes united in advance of or overlying isthmus which flaps over the vestibule so formed. Gill-openings very wide. A slit behind fourth arch. Four or five soft, knob-like gill-rakers on lower part of first gill-arch. No pseudobranch. Gill-chamber with raised posterior bony rim.

Head (22 mm.) nearly 3, depth (19) 3.4 in standard length (65). Eye (5) equals snout (5), less than interorbital (nearly 7) or depth of caudal peduncle (8). Predorsal length (18) more than breadth of body (16).

Body robust anteriorly, its greatest depth near ventral base, compressed posteriorly, scaleless, the skin papillate. Lateral line with low, ridge-like tubes, running from upper part of operculum steeply down to above middle of side between soft dorsal and anal fin and ending at middle of root of tail, without flaps or filaments. Vent plicate, with a papilla, in advance of anal fin.

Dorsal fin originating well behind level of eye, on nape over operculum. First three spines slightly separate from others, the second longer than first or third, which are very short. The second dorsal fin begins with several low spines which pass imperceptibly into simple, articulated rays, the fourth from the posterior end being longest. Anal similar to soft dorsal, without pungent spines. All the fin-rays are unbranched. Pectoral without free rays, seventh ray longest. Ventrals behind level of head, last two rays longest. Last dorsal ray united by membrane to upper caudal ray; last anal ray well in advance of this level. Caudal truncate, with rounded corners.

Head and body light-brown with darker marblings tending to form four bars descending from back. Belly little lighter. Fins smoky-grey to brownish, variegated; tips of anterior dorsal spines pale; the pectorals and anal very dark; no striking axillary markings. Eye blue, surrounded by dusky radii.

Loc.—Deception Bay, Queensland; taken in prawn-trawl, Mr. A. J. Keong, 1951.

Described and figured from the unique holotype, No. 1013 in the collection of the Department of Harbours and Marine, Brisbane, Queensland. Total length 82 mm. or $3\frac{1}{4}$ inches.

Suggested vernacular name, Brown Carpet Fish.

Latin *dolosus*, deceitful, partly from its camouflaging coloration and partly from the type-locality, Deception Bay.

Genus **Membracidichthys** Whitley, 1933.

Adventor, subgen. nov.

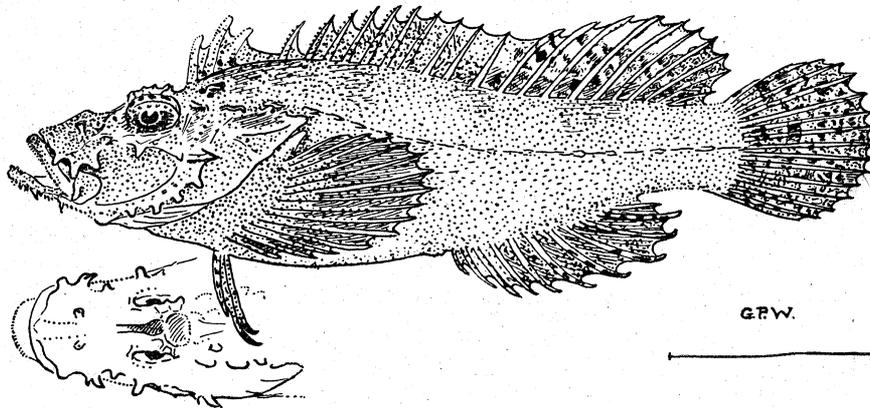
Orthotype, *M. (A.) elongatus*, sp. nov.

A fish similar in facies to the Aploactidae, but having the dorsal origin behind the eye as in most Scorpaenidae; the depth is more than 4 in *total* length and eye more than 4 in head.

Evidently an elongate representative of *Membracidichthys* Whitley (Rec.Austr. Mus., xix, 1933, p. 102), but the genotypical species, *obbesi* Weber (Siboga Exped., Ivii, Fische, 1913, p. 503, figs. 104 and 105), has steeper profile, shorter form, one more ventral ray, and dorsal originating over middle of eye, the latter not much less than snout in length. *Aniculerosa* Whitley (loc. cit., p. 101) has shorter habit, more ventral rays, and dorsal origin over front of eye.

Latin *adventor*, a visitor.

Membracidichthys (*Adventor*) *elongatus*, subgen. & sp. nov.



(Figure 2.)

D. iii, 10, 10. A. 11. P. 14. V. i, 2. C. 4, 10, 2. L.lat. 12.

Depth (25 mm.) 4.05, head (31) nearly 3.4, length of caudal (17) 6 in *total* length (105). Eye (6) 5.1 in head, 2 in snout (12) and equal to interorbital (6). Depth of caudal peduncle, 10 mm.; breadth of body, 16; second dorsal spine, 8; standard length, 87. Predorsal length (19) equals breadth of head, which is slightly more than its depth.

Chin projecting. Profile of head low. Mouth not reaching below the small eye. Villiform teeth on jaws and vomer. Nostril with tube. A barbel overhangs corner of upper lip. Chin with pits and processes like small barbels. Supraorbital sculptured. Three divergent, blunt preorbital spines. Two suborbital spines, behind which the stay crosses to the preoperculum, whose margin has 5 blunt spines. Opercular spine weak. Usual nuchal and occipital ridges, without rugae or spines. Interorbital with pear-shaped, sunken median area, broad end facing the rectangularly excavate nape. Tongue pointed, adnate to floor of mouth. Gill-membranes free of isthmus. Only 5 rudimentary papilla-like gill-rakers on lower part of first gill-arch; no slit behind last gill-arch. No pseudobranch.

Head and body long, compressed, naked of scales but densely covered with velvety papillae which even extend around eye. Lateral line canal running along upper half, following curve of back, and with 12 raised pores. Vent small, plicate, with papilla, in advance of anal fin.

Dorsal originating well behind eye, its first three spines (the second of which is longest) distinct from the fourth and the remainder, the last joined to the higher soft dorsal which joins caudal peduncle. All fin-rays simple. Caudal broadly rounded. No free pectoral rays, 5th and 6th pectoral rays longest. Ventrals below operculum and front dorsal spines.

Colour dark-reddish chocolate-brown, irregularly variegated with paler and darker tones, particularly on the fins. Small dark-brown ocelli give an illusion of pits on top of head, in hollows of nape, and around spinous dorsal fin. No striking axillary markings. Eye blue. Indistinct brown spots along inner posterior margin of gill-opening.

Loc.—Tiflis Passage, Moreton Bay, Queensland. Otter trawl, 3rd June, 1951; T. C. Marshall and G. P. Whitley.

Described and figured from the unique holotype, No. 516 in the collection of the Department of Harbours and Marine, Brisbane. Total length, 105 mm. or $4\frac{1}{8}$ inches.