

# REVIEW OF THE INDO-PACIFIC PIPEFISH GENUS *STIGMATOPORA* (SYNGNATHIDAE)

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## SUMMARY

The syngnathine (tail-pouch) genus *Stigmatopora* (type-species: *Syngnathus argus* Richardson) is rediagnosed and compared to other pipefishes with confluent superior trunk and tail ridges. Descriptions, illustrations, key, synonymies and data on variation and distribution are given for the three recognized species: *S. argus* (Australia), *S. nigra* (Australia and New Zealand), *S. macropterygia* (New Zealand and Auckland Is.).

## INTRODUCTION

In continuation of review studies of Indo-Pacific pipefishes, I here treat the syngnathine (tail-pouch) genus *Stigmatopora* Kaup. References to species of the genus are not uncommon in regional literature but most consist of inadequate descriptions, inclusion in keys and species lists or more detailed treatments of a few specimens from restricted localities. As a result, the nomenclature is in part confused, descriptions and diagnoses are often inadequate, identification is difficult, distribution is uncertain and little information on intraspecific variation is available. This report, based on the majority of known museum holdings, clarifies some of these problems and provides a basis for future detailed studies on the biology and ecology of these subtropical-temperate pipefishes.

## METHODS AND MATERIALS

Distal portions of the tail are often lost in specimens of *Stigmatopora* and frequencies of tail rings are not employed here for species identification. For the same reason, total length (TL) measurements are often of uncertain accuracy and proportional data are here referred to measurements (mm) of head length (HL). Coloration may be sexually dimorphic and may also exhibit considerable individual variation within and between samples of the same species. Present colour descriptions are therefore based on the most characteristic or more frequently encountered markings of specimens preserved in alcohol. Some meristic data (Tables 2-5) have been grouped to simplify presentation and these may not agree exactly with counts given in diagnoses and descriptions. As employed here, the term "venter" refers to the ventral surface. Measurements in Materials Examined sections are approximate and, except in the case of type material, loss of distal tail rings or other damage is not indicated. Lengths of damaged types are approximations of the present overall length. Other methods and definitions of counts and measurements follow Dawson (1977).

Abbreviations for repositories of examined material follow: AMS — Australian Museum, Sydney; BMNH — British Museum (Natural History); GCRL — Gulf Coast Research Laboratory Museum; MCZ — Museum of Comparative Zoology, Harvard Univ., MNHN — Muséum National d'Histoire Naturelle, Paris; NMNZ — National