

The Pelagic Larva of the Midnight Snapper, *Macolor macularis* (Teleostei: Lutjanidae)

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ABSTRACT. A larva of the Indo-West Pacific lutjanid fish *Macolor macularis* Fowler, the Midnight Snapper, is described from a 6.0 mm (standard length) specimen, collected in the western Pacific Ocean (2°58.1'S 158°14.3'E). Although recently settled *M. macularis* have been described, this is the first report of a pelagic larva. The deep-bodied larva is typical of the perciform family Lutjanidae and is characterized by 24 myomeres, laterally compressed head and body, robust, long dorsal and pelvic-fin spines with fine serrations and strong head spination. The larva of *M. macularis* can be distinguished from the similar larvae of *Macolor niger* (Forsskål) by having fin-ray counts of D X, 13 and A III, 10, the greater relative length of the second to third dorsal-fin spine and the lack of any opercular melanophores. Larvae of *Macolor* species are rare, juveniles are not common and adults live to 40–50 years. These facts indicate *Macolor* species have a life history extremely vulnerable to exploitation.

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The two species of the lutjanid genus *Macolor* Bleeker, *M. niger* (Forsskål), the Black-and-white Snapper, and *M. macularis* Fowler, the Midnight Snapper, are, as adults, closely associated with coral reefs and widely distributed in the Indo-Pacific (Anderson & Allen, 2001). In spite of the abundance of adult *Macolor* species on coral reefs, larvae are extremely rare in collections. Knowledge of early life history stages of *Macolor* species is limited to larvae of *Macolor niger* (Leis, 2007) and recently settled individuals of both *M. niger* and *M. macularis* (Kishimoto *et al.*, 1987; Leis, 2007). Until now, no larvae of *M. macularis* have been reported or described. Our purpose here is to describe a single 6.0 mm SL larva of *M. macularis* from the southwest Pacific Ocean north of the Solomon Islands that was found in the collections of the Far Seas Fisheries Research Laboratory, Shimizu, recently transferred to the National Museum of Nature and Science, Tokyo.

Materials and methods

Measurements and abbreviations follow Leis & Carson-Ewart (2004). Lengths are Standard Length (SL). Percentages are of SL. Fig. 1 was prepared with the aid of a camera lucida. Pigment refers to melanophores in preserved specimens. Specimens examined are deposited in Institute of Oceanic Research and Development, Tokai University (IORD) and National Museum of Nature and Science, Tokyo (NSMT).

Identification. The specimen was identified as a lutjanid through the characteristics listed by Leis & Rennis (2004) including: 24 myomeres; laterally compressed body and head; very long dorsal-fin spines (particularly the second) and pelvic-fin spines; fin spines that are smooth to very weakly serrate; longest P2 ray at least as long as P2 spine;

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