

Addition of Blacklip Dragonet, *Synchiropus atrilabiatatus* (Garman, 1899) (Pisces: Callionymidae) to the California Ichthyofauna

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ABSTRACT

Dragonets (family: Callionymidae) are small, often colorful, benthic fishes found in coastal tropical waters of the Atlantic, Indian, and Pacific Oceans, but primarily in the Indo-West Pacific (Nelson 1994). The systematics of this family are not well known, with numbers of taxa ranging from 8 genera and 40 species to 19 genera and 139 species (Grove and Lavenberg 1997). The only dragonet known from the Eastern Pacific is *Synchiropus atrilabiatatus* (Garman 1899), which is found primarily off Mexico and Central America (Grove and Lavenberg 1997).

Following the 1997-1998 El Nino, two specimens of the blacklip dragonet were collected in the Southern California Bight (SCB) by semiballon (7.6-m wide headrope) otter trawls with 1.2-cm cod-end mesh. The first specimen (56 mm SL) was collected on 23 July 1998 off Santa Catalina Island (latitude 33°17.68'N, longitude 118°17.00'W) at a depth of 97 m, during the Southern California Bight 1998 Regional Survey (Bight'98), a bight-wide survey of the mainland and island shelves of southern California. The second specimen (90 mm SL) was collected on January 19, 1999 off Point Loma, California (latitude 32°37.54'N, longitude 117°19.37'W) at a depth of 100 m. It was captured at one of the City of San Diego, Metropolitan Wastewater Department, Environmental Monitoring and Technical Services' long-term, fixed-location trawl monitoring stations, which has been sampled quarterly since July 1991. City of San Diego marine biologists brought this specimen to the attention of the second author (RHR), who identified it as *Synchiropus atrilabiatatus*. This was the first specimen identified from California waters although it was the second specimen collected. The third author (MJA) identified the first-caught specimen later when voucher specimens collected during the Bight'98 survey were sent to SCCWRP for taxonomic confirmation. Both specimens had similar meristics (Table 1) and have been catalogued in the SIO Marine Vertebrates Collection: SIO 99-1 (Point Loma) and SIO 00-79 (Santa Catalina Island). The previous published geographic range of this species was from Bahia Magdalena, Baja California Sur, Mexico and the Gulf of California to Talara, Peru, including Gorda Banks (off Cabo San Lucas, Baja California Sur, Mexico), Cocos Island, and the Galapagos Islands (Fricke 1981; Cruz-Aguero et al. 1994). The capture of *Synchiropus atrilabiatatus* at Santa Catalina Island represents a range extension of 1,250 km north of its northernmost published record at Bahia Magdalena, Mexico (latitude 24°35.0'N) (Cruz-Aguero et al. 1994; Love et al. 1996¹) and about 650 km from its previous northernmost unpublished occurrence (i.e., Bahia Playa Maria, Baja California, Mex.; latitude 28°52.0'N, longitude 114°30.0'W; 1 September 1952; SIO 52-60).

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