

Revision of the threadfin genus *Polydactylus* (Perciformes: Polynemidae) from the eastern Pacific Ocean

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Abstract The taxonomy of the eastern Pacific species of *Polydactylus* was revised, resulting in the recognition of two species: *Polydactylus approximans* (Lay and Bennett, 1839), a senior synonym of *Polynemus californiensis* Thominot, 1886; and *Polydactylus opercularis* (Gill, 1863), a senior synonym of *Polynemus melanopoma* Günther, 1864. Redescriptions of the two species and comparisons with related congeners are presented. The type material status of *Polydactylus approximans* and the type locality of *Polydactylus opercularis* are also discussed.

Key words Revision · *Polydactylus approximans* · *Polydactylus opercularis* · Eastern Pacific

Four nominal species of the family Polynemidae, viz., *Polynemus approximans* Lay and Bennett, 1839, *Trichidion opercularis* Gill, 1863, *Polynemus melanopoma* Günther, 1864, and *Polynemus californiensis* Thominot, 1886, have been reported from the eastern Pacific Ocean. Of these, *Polynemus approximans* and *Trichidion opercularis* have been widely regarded as valid species, both having been regarded to belong to *Polydactylus* (Eschmeyer and Herald, 1983; Allen and Robertson, 1994; Schneider, 1995). Although these two species have been mentioned in numerous brief treatments of general classification and regional faunal studies (Hildebrand, 1946; Bussing and López S., 1994; Grove and Lavenberg, 1997; Chirichigno F. and Vélez D., 1998), they have at no time been reconsidered on the basis of type data and an appropriate range of non-type material. Furthermore, two other nominal species, *Polynemus californiensis* and *Polynemus melanopoma*, have not been reported since their original descriptions, except in a type catalog report of the former, resulting in the taxonomic status of the two species still not being clear.

Polynemus californiensis and *Polynemus melanopoma* are herein regarded as junior synonyms of *Polydactylus approximans* and *Polydactylus opercularis*, respectively, following examination of type and non-type material, representing wide distributional ranges. Redescriptions of the latter two are given here, along with a discussion of certain aspects of the type data of both.

Materials and Methods

Counts and measurements follow Hubbs and Lagler (1947) and Motomura et al. (2000b, 2002a). Counts of pectoral

filaments begin with the anteriormost (ventralmost) element. Standard and total lengths are expressed as SL and TL, respectively. Terminology of the supraneural bones follows Mabee (1988), and the formula for configuration of the supraneural bones, anterior neural spines, and anterior dorsal fin pterygiophores follows Ahlstrom et al. (1976). Institutional codes follow Leviton et al. (1985). The presence of a swimbladder in *Polydactylus approximans* and its absence in *Polydactylus opercularis* were confirmed from seven specimens [USNM 15129, 41393, 46488 (1 of 3 specimens), 46876, 47464, 65621, and 94015] and 15 specimens [USNM 50343 (2), 65622 (3), 79871, 177799 (1 of 2), 181287 (5), 181320, 200371, 367309 (1 of 18)], respectively, the abdomens of these fish having already been dissected. Osteological characters were confirmed from X-ray photos taken of 11 *Polydactylus approximans* [USNM 43265, 53517, 65621, 127892, 220698, 220779, 220784 (3); BMNH 1863.12.16.30, 1866.1.14.6] and 10 *Polydactylus opercularis* [USNM 177799 (2), 181287 (5), 367308 (2); BMNH 1864.1.26.321].

Genus *Polydactylus* Lacepède, 1803

Polydactylus plumierii, described as a new genus and species by Lacepède (1803), is presently regarded as a junior synonym of a western Atlantic species, *Polydactylus virginicus* (Linnaeus). Accordingly, the type species of *Polydactylus* is considered to be the same species as *Polydactylus virginicus* (Talwar and Jhingran, 1992; Castro-Aguirre et al., 1999).

Polydactylus differs from seven other valid polynemid genera (listed by Motomura and Iwatsuki, 2001a) in having the following combination of characters (Motomura et al., 2000a,b, 2001a,c,d,g,j, 2002b; Motomura and Iwatsuki,

2001b): dermal eye opening 1.3 or less in snout length (1.3 or more in *Parapolyneumus* and *Polyneumus*, see Feltes, 1993; Motomura and Sabaj, 2002; Motomura et al., 2002c); width of tooth band on upper and lower jaws wider than space separating tooth bands on opposing premaxilla (narrower in *Filimanius* and *Pentanemus*, see Feltes, 1991; Motomura et al., 2000c, 2001f,i); lip on anterior part of lower jaw either well or poorly developed (absent in *Eleutheronema*, see Motomura et al., 2002a); basisphenoid in contact with prootic (not in contact in *Filimanius* and basisphenoid absent in *Parapolyneumus* and *Polyneumus*, see Feltes, 1991, 1993; Motomura et al., 2001i); pectoral fin base including base of pectoral filaments less than upper jaw length (greater in *Galeoides*, see Feltes, 1993; Motomura et al., 2001b,e); anal fin soft rays less than 18 (more than 24 in *Pentanemus*, see Feltes, 1993); swimbladder absent or simple, not extending beyond anal fin origin (swimbladder with many appendages in *Leptomelanosoma*, see Motomura and Iwatsuki, 2001a, and swimbladder extending beyond anal fin origin in *Galeoides*, see Feltes, 1993; Motomura et al., 2001b).

Polydactylus is distributed from tropical to temperate areas worldwide: 14 species currently recognized as valid occurring in the Indo-Pacific (Motomura et al., 2000b, 2001a,c,d,g,i,j, 2002b; Motomura and Iwatsuki, 2001a,b), 2 species in the eastern Pacific (Allen and Robertson, 1994; Schneider, 1995; this study), 3 species in the western Atlantic (Randall, 1978; Robins and Ray, 1986), and 1 species in the eastern Atlantic (Allen, 1981; Njock, 1990).

Polydactylus approximans
(Lay and Bennett, 1839)

(English name: blue bobo)

(Spanish name: barbudo seis barbas)

(Figs. 1A, 1B, 2A)

Polyneumus approximans Lay and Bennett, 1839: 57 (type locality: San Blas and Mazatlán, west coast of Mexico, based on a brief sketch and description by Mr. Collie).

Polyneumus californiensis Thominot, 1886: 161 (type locality: California, USA).

Material examined. 58 specimens, 24–228 mm SL. BMNH 1863.12.16.30 (previously regarded as 1 of 2 syntypes of *Polyneumus approximans* Lay and Bennett, see Remarks), 107 mm SL, Panama; BMNH 1866.1.14.6 (previously regarded as 1 of 2 syntypes of *Polyneumus approximans* Lay and Bennett, see Remarks), 215 mm SL, Panama; CAS 2823, 122 mm SL, Bathing beach, Acapulco Bay, Guerrero, Mexico; CAS SU 6292, 186 mm SL, Lima, Bay of Callao, Peru; CAS SU 35305, 183 mm SL, Monterey Bay, California, USA; MNHN 1884-487 (holotype of *Polyneumus californiensis* Thominot), 179 mm SL, California, USA; USNM 15129, 123 mm SL, Panama; USNM 41393, 174 mm SL, Panama; USNM 43265, 143 mm SL, Guaymas, Gulf of California, Mexico; USNM 46488 (3 specimens), 78–91 mm SL, San Juan, Mexico; USNM 46876, 183 mm SL, Panama; USNM 47464, 225 mm SL, Mazatlán, Mexico; USNM 53517, 143 mm SL, Ecuador; USNM 65621, 152 mm SL, Panama; USNM 77637, 161 mm SL, Tumbes, Peru; USNM 79873 (2), 168–197 mm SL, Panama; USNM 82194, 61 mm SL, Chame, Panama; USNM 94015, 95 mm SL, Ecuador; USNM 94041, 112 mm SL, Panama; USNM 114468 (5), 181–228 mm SL, Guatemala; USNM 127891 (2), 122–188 mm SL, Puerto Pizarro, Peru;

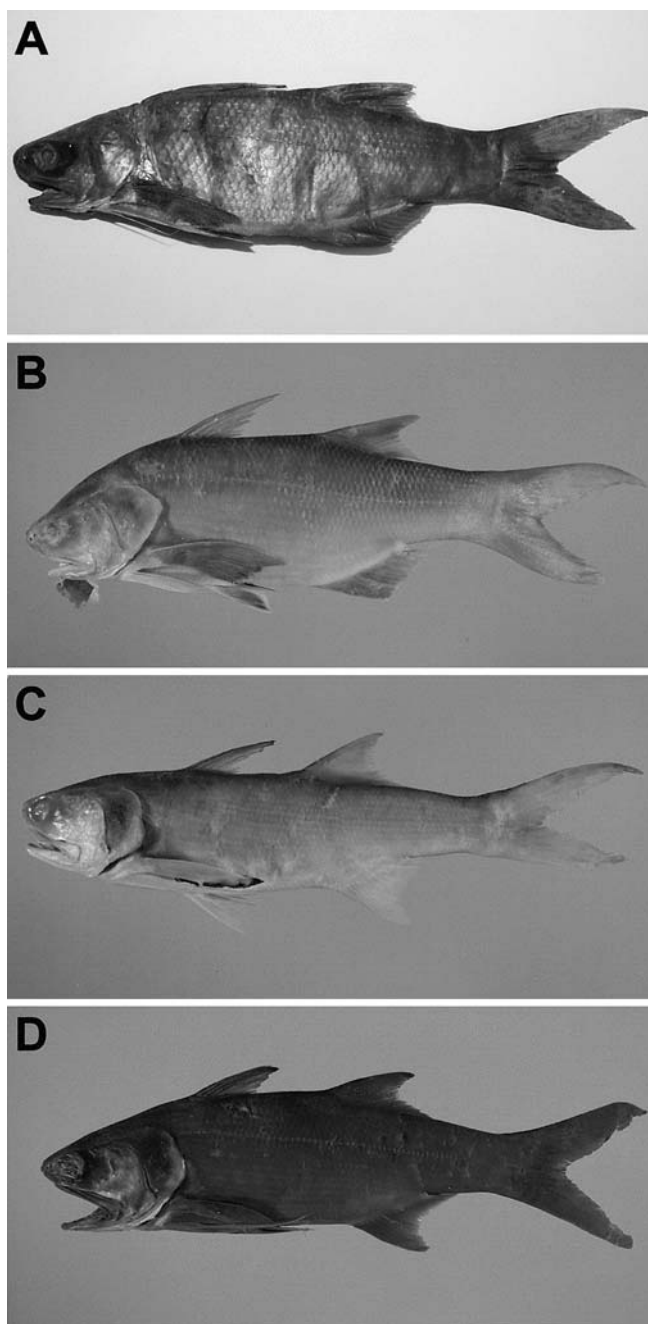


Fig. 1. *Polydactylus approximans* (A, B) and *Polydactylus opercularis* (C, D). **A** MNHN 1884-487 (holotype of *Polyneumus californiensis* Thominot), 179 mm SL, California. **B** BMNH 1866.1.14.6 (previously regarded as syntype of *Polyneumus approximans* Lay and Bennett), 215 mm SL, Panama. **C** BMNH 1864.1.26.321 (holotype of *Polyneumus melanopoma* Günther), 263 mm SL, Guatemala. **D** USNM 41054, 179 mm SL, Panama

USNM 127892, 165 mm SL, Puerto Pizarro, Peru; USNM 127893, 96 mm SL, Lobos de Tierra Island, Peru; USNM 177788 (1 of 8 specimens), 30 mm SL, off Nicaragua (11°58' N, 91°30' W); USNM 177789, 34 mm SL, off Oaxaca, Mexico (15°24' N, 97°20' W); USNM 177808 (3), 92–136 mm SL, San Blas, Nayarit, Mexico; USNM 181256, 24 mm SL, San Jose, Guatemala; USNM 181276 (1 of 7 specimens), 60 mm SL, Gulf of Nicoya, Costa Rica; USNM 181280 (1 of 3 specimens), 37 mm SL,

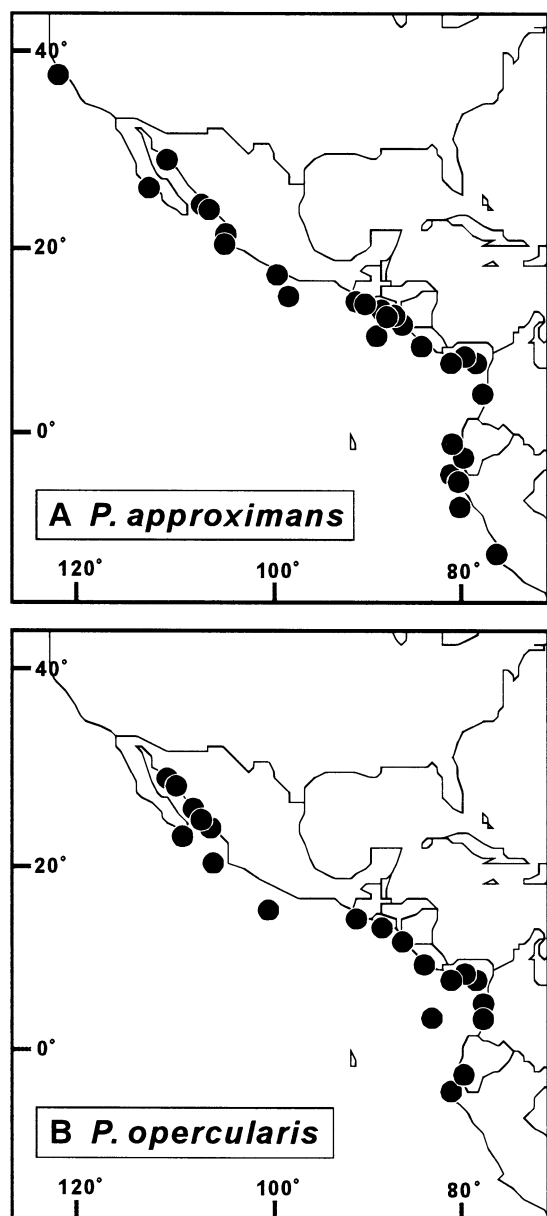


Fig. 2. Geographic distribution of **A** *Polydactylus approximans* and **B** *Polydactylus opercularis*, based only on specimens examined in this study

22.4 km south of Maria Cleofas Island, Marias Islands, Mexico; USNM 220698, 138 mm SL, Jiquilisco, El Salvador; USNM 220779, 201 mm SL, Jiquilisco, El Salvador; USNM 220784 (3), 136–148 mm SL, La Caramba, Jiquilisco Bay, El Salvador; USNM 290055 (2), 151–155 mm SL, Colombia; USNM 304426 (4), 56–82 mm SL, 8.32 km north of Mazatlán, Mexico; USNM 321984 (3), 101–138 mm SL, El Rompio, Panama; USNM 321985, 205 mm SL, Chitré, Panama; USNM 366749 (2), 109–133 mm SL, off Gulf of Fonseca, El Salvador; USNM 366761, 120 mm SL, off Gulf of Fonseca, El Salvador; USNM 366766, 75 mm SL, off Gulf of Fonseca, El Salvador.

Diagnosis. A species of *Polydactylus* with the following combination of characters: 6 (rarely asymmetrically 6 and 7, 2 of 58 specimens) pectoral filaments, longest filament not extending beyond level of posterior end of anal fin base; 56–

63 (mode 60) pored lateral line scales; lip on lower jaw well developed, dentary teeth restricted to dorsal surface; vomerine teeth present; maxilla not covered with scales; lateral line bifurcated on caudal fin membranes, extending to posterior margins of upper and lower caudal fin lobes; swimbladder present, small; body grayish, no stripes or spots.

Description. Counts and proportional measurements as percentages of SL of *Polydactylus approximans*, including the holotype of *Polynemus californiensis*, are given in Table 1. Characters given in the diagnosis of the species are not repeated here.

Body oblong, compressed; obtusely conical snout projecting strongly beyond upper jaw; occipital profile nearly straight in young, becoming somewhat concave with growth; adipose eyelid well developed; posterior margin of maxilla not reaching to or extending slightly beyond level of posterior margin of adipose eyelid; lip on upper jaw thin; teeth villiform in broad bands on vomer, palatines, and ectopterygoids; tooth plate on palatines wider than those on ectopterygoids; shape of vomerine tooth plate crescentic or elliptic; posterior margin of preopercle serrated; all first dorsal fin spine bases of similar thickness; first spine of first dorsal fin very small; third spine of first dorsal fin longest, posterior tip of third spine sometimes extending well beyond level of second dorsal fin origin; first spine of anal fin very small, third spine longest; bases of dorsal, pectoral, anal, and caudal fin covered with scales; all pectoral fin rays unbranched, posterior tip not reaching to or extending beyond level of posterior tip of pelvic fin; pectoral fin insertion well below midline of body; first pectoral filament shortest, just reaching to or extending slightly beyond level of pelvic fin origin; second to fourth pectoral filaments extending beyond level of pelvic fin origin; length of fifth pectoral filament variable, from not reaching level with posterior margin of pelvic fin to just reaching level with anal fin origin; sixth pectoral filament longest, just short of level of anal fin origin or reaching to near midpoint of anal fin base; poorly developed membranes present near base on dorsal margins of pectoral filaments; caudal fin deeply forked, upper and lower caudal fin lobes not filamentous; formula for configuration of supraneural bones, anterior neural spines, and anterior dorsal pterygiophores 0/0/0 + 2/1 + 1/1/1/1/1; 10 + 14 vertebrae.

Color when fresh.—Head and body gray dorsally, silver ventrally; anterior margins of first and second dorsal fins black, remaining parts dusky; pectoral fin dusky; base of pectoral filaments white, becoming blackish on posterior tips; base and posterior margin of pelvic fin white, remaining parts dusky; posterior margin of anal fin white, remaining parts dusky; margins of caudal fin black, remaining parts dusky.

Color of preserved specimens.—Head and body brown dorsally, pale yellowish-silver ventrally; first and second dorsal, anal, and caudal fins uniformly pale yellow; intensity of pectoral fin pigmentation variable from dense black to translucent; pectoral filaments pale yellow; base of pelvic fin pale yellow, posterior margin of pelvic fin white or translucent, remaining parts grayish-black.

Table 1. Counts and measurements of eastern Pacific *Polydactylus* species, expressed as percentages of standard length

	<i>Polydactylus approximans</i>		<i>Polydactylus opercularis</i>	
	Holotype of <i>Polynemus californiensis</i> MNHN 1884-487	Non-types of <i>Polydactylus approximans</i> <i>n</i> = 57	Holotype of <i>Polynemus melanopoma</i> BMNH 1864.1.26.321	Non-types of <i>Polydactylus opercularis</i> <i>n</i> = 53
Standard length (mm)	179	24–228	263	19–309
Counts				
Dorsal fin rays	VIII-I, 12	VIII-I, 11–13	VIII-I, 12	VIII-I, 11–13
Anal fin rays	III, 14	III, 13–15	III, 13	III, 12–14
Pectoral fin rays	15	14–16	16	14–16
Pectoral filaments	6	6–7	9	8–9
Pelvic fin rays	I, 5	I, 5	I, 5	I, 5
Pored lateral line scales	58	56–63	71	66–74
Scales above/below lateral line	8/12	7–8/11–13	9/12	7–10/12–15
Gill rakers	12 + 17 = 29	11–14 + 15–18 = 26–31	16 + 19 = 35	13–18 + 17–20 = 31–37
Measurements				
Head length	29	28–35 (31)	32	29–33 (31)
Body depth at 1st dorsal fin origin	27	25–32 (30)	26	25–29 (27)
Body depth at 2nd dorsal fin origin	29	29–34 (32)	25	25–29 (27)
Body width at pectoral fin base	12	10–16 (13)	12	12–16 (13)
Snout length	4	5–6 (5)	5	4–6 (5)
Dermal eye opening	6	6–7 (6)	5	5–7 (6)
Orbit diameter	7	7–8 (7)	7	5–8 (7)
Interorbital width	8	7–8 (7)	7	7–8 (7)
Postorbital length	17	16–21 (19)	22	19–22 (20)
Upper jaw length	13	13–15 (14)	18	16–18 (17)
Depth at posterior margin of premaxilla	4	3–4 (3)	4	3–4 (3)
Pre-1st dorsal fin length	35	36–40 (38)	36	34–37 (35)
Pre-2nd dorsal fin length	62	63–68 (65)	61	61–63 (62)
Preanal fin length	58	57–64 (64)	68	61–68 (65)
Pelvic fin origin to anal fin origin	22	20–27 (23)	31	23–31 (27)
Second dorsal fin base length	15	14–17 (15)	15	14–16 (15)
Anal fin base length	23	20–23 (22)	16	16–18 (16)
Longest pectoral fin length	25	24–32 (28)	22	20–24 (22)
Longest pectoral filament length	34	35–48 (41)	32	30–41 (36)
Pectoral fin base length	10	9–12 (10)	10	9–10 (9)
Longest pelvic fin ray length (1st)	16	16–17 (16)	16	14–17 (16)
Longest 1st dorsal fin spine length (3rd)	22 ^a	16–26 (23)	19	17–21 (19)
Second dorsal fin spine length	—	7–11 (9)	7	6–8 (7)
Longest 2nd dorsal fin ray length (2nd)	20 ^a	22–26 (24)	19	18–21 (19)
Longest anal fin spine length (3rd)	8	6–10 (9)	6	6–8 (7)
Longest anal fin ray length (2nd)	18	17–22 (20)	18	16–20 (18)
Caudal peduncle length	22	21–26 (23)	22	21–23 (22)
Caudal peduncle depth	15	14–16 (15)	12	11–13 (12)
Upper caudal fin lobe length	35 ^a	37–43 (40)	35 ^a	31–38 (35)
Lower caudal fin lobe length	33 ^a	35–40 (37)	31 ^a	30–36 (33)

Means in parentheses include type data

^aTip slightly broken

Distribution and habitat. *Polydactylus approximans* is currently known from the eastern Pacific Ocean, where it ranges from Monterey Bay, California, USA, to Callao, Peru (Fig. 2A), being relatively common in the Central American region in latitudes between 5° and 20° N. Grove and Lavenberg (1997) reported a single small example (LACM W53–178) collected from the Galápagos Islands, the species normally being considered to occur rarely around the

islands. Although Pequeño (1989) listed *Polydactylus approximans* and *Polydactylus opercularis* from Chile, such records remain unsubstantiated.

Although the species generally inhabits muddy or sandy bottoms in coastal waters and estuaries, larvae and juveniles (less than ca. 40 mm SL) sometimes occur at the water surface several hundred kilometers offshore (Grove and Lavenberg, 1997). Most of the collection data available indi-

cate that the specimens were taken from depths less than 30 m.

Remarks. *Polydactylus approximans* was originally described as *Polynemus approximans* by Lay and Bennett (1839), on the basis of a brief sketch and description by Mr. Collie. Eschmeyer (1998) questioned the status of two syntypes of *Polynemus approximans*, registered as BMNH 1863.12.16.30 and BMNH 1866.1.14.6 (see Fig. 1B), the original description of the species giving no indication of type specimens. Although the type locality of the species was given as San Blas and Mazatlán, west coast of Mexico (Lay and Bennett, 1839), the collection data of the two BMNH specimens indicated they had been collected from Panama. Furthermore, according to Lay and Bennett (1839), Mr. Collie investigated the anatomy of the stomach, pyloric caeca, and intestine of the species. Although the abdomen of one of the two BMNH specimens (BMNH 1866.1.14.6) has been cut, the slit is very small and not sufficient for observation of the internal organs. Moreover, the specimen used for the sketch by Mr. Collie measured ca. 178 mm (probably TL) and 25 mm wide (Lay and Bennett, 1839), whereas BMNH 1863.12.16.30 and BMNH 1866.1.14.6 are 107 mm SL (caudal fin lobe tip damaged but ca. 141 mm TL) and 11 mm wide, and 215 mm SL (ca. 293 mm TL) and 30 mm wide, respectively. Accordingly, we conclude that the two BMNH specimens of *Polydactylus approximans* are not type material of *Polynemus approximans*, the original specimens most likely having been lost.

According to the original description, *Polynemus approximans* was characterized by having six pectoral filaments and grayish body color, characteristics consistent with those of specimens considered here as *Polydactylus approximans*. Although Lay and Bennett (1839) quoted the absence of a swimbladder in the species from the brief description by Mr. Collie, the presence of a swimbladder was confirmed by our examination of seven USNM specimens (see Materials and Methods). The swimbladder was apparently overlooked by Mr. Collie due to its very small size (length ca. 13% of SL).

Polynemus californiensis was originally described by Thomiot (1886) from California, USA, on the basis of a single specimen (MNHN 1884-487, 179 mm SL; Fig. 1A). The only subsequent reference to the species was by Blanc and Hureau (1971), who listed it as the same species with *Polydactylus approximans* in the type catalogue of the Muséum national d'Histoire naturelle, giving neither reasons nor an indication of materials examined. The holotype of *Polynemus californiensis* has the following characters: lip on lower jaw well developed, dentary teeth restricted to dorsal surface; maxilla not covered with scales; lateral line bifurcated on caudal fin membranes, extending to posterior margins of upper and lower caudal fin lobes. These characters, and meristics and proportional measurements (listed in Table 1) agreed well with those of specimens considered here as *Polydactylus approximans* (see Table 1). Accordingly, *Polynemus californiensis* is herein regarded as a junior synonym of *Polydactylus approximans*.

Polydactylus opercularis (Gill, 1863)

(English name: yellow bobo)

(Spanish name: barbudo nueve barbas)

(Figs. 1C, 1D, 2B)

Trichidion opercularis Gill, 1863: 168 (type locality: west coast of Central America, probably Cape San Lucas, Baja California, Mexico; see Remarks).

Polynemus melanopoma Günther, 1864: 148 (type locality: San José, Guatemala).

Material examined. 54 specimens, 19–309 mm SL. BMNH 1864.1.26.321 (holotype of *Polynemus melanopoma* Günther), 263 mm SL, San José, Guatemala; CAS SU 51242, 136 mm SL, off Chira Islands, Gulf of Nicoya, Costa Rica; CAS SU 51252, 31 mm SL, Jalisco, Mexico; USNM 41054, 179 mm SL, Panama; USNM 41218, 85 mm SL, Panama; USNM 50343 (2 specimens), 210–236 mm SL, Panama; USNM 65622 (3), 109–187 mm SL, Panama; USNM 76811, 215 mm SL, Panama; USNM 79870, 270 mm SL, Panama; USNM 79871, 264 mm SL, Panama; USNM 79878, 132 mm SL, Panama; USNM 119740, 137 mm SL, Guaymas, Gulf of California, Mexico; USNM 127890, 309 mm SL, off Puerto Pizarro, Peru; USNM 177799 (2), Sinaloa, Gulf of California, Mexico; USNM 177800, Sonora, Gulf of California, Mexico; USNM 181254 (1 of 2 specimens), 19 mm SL, off Guerrero, Mexico (16°6' N, 100°19' W); USNM 181257, 27 mm SL, Malpelo Island, Colombia; USNM 181262 (2), 47–48 mm SL, south of Corinto, Nicaragua; USNM 181287 (5), 140–160 mm SL, Topolobampo, Gulf of California, Mexico; USNM 181320, 208 mm SL, San Blas, Nayarit, Gulf of California, Mexico; USNM 200371, 267 mm SL, Tumbes, Peru; USNM 367307 (3), 202–246 mm SL, Gulf of Panama, Panama; USNM 367308 (2), 158–185 mm SL, south of Buenaventura, Colombia; USNM 367166, 174 mm SL, off Punta Ampala, Gulf of Fonseca, El Salvador; USNM 367309 (18), 159–252 mm SL, Punta Coco, Colombia.

Diagnosis. A species of *Polydactylus* with the following combination of characters: 9 (rarely 8, 2 of 54 specimens; asymmetrically 8 and 9, 1 of 54 specimens) pectoral filaments; 66–74 (mode 70) pored lateral line scales; anterior parts of lower jaw with villiform teeth extending onto lateral surface, adjacent portion of lip poorly developed in larger specimens; vomerine teeth present; maxilla covered with small deciduous scales; lateral line unbranched, extending to upper end of lower caudal fin lobe; swimbladder absent; body, especially fins, yellowish, no stripes or spots.

Description. Counts and proportional measurements as percentages of SL of *Polydactylus opercularis*, including the holotype of *Polynemus melanopoma*, are given in Table 1. Characters given in the diagnosis of the species are not repeated here.

Body oblong, compressed; obtusely conical snout projecting strongly beyond upper jaw; occipital profile nearly straight throughout life; adipose eyelid well developed; posterior margin of maxilla extending well beyond level of posterior margin of adipose eyelid; lip on upper jaw thin; teeth villiform in broad bands on vomer, palatines, and ectopterygoids; tooth plate on palatines wider than those on ectopterygoids; shape of vomerine tooth plate nearly square; posterior margin of preopercle serrated; all first dorsal fin spine bases of similar thickness; first spine of first dorsal fin very small; third spine of first dorsal fin longest, posterior tip of third spine not reaching to level of second

dorsal fin origin; first spine of anal, fin very small, third spine longest; bases of dorsal, pectoral, anal, and caudal fin covered with scales; all pectoral fin rays unbranched, posterior tip not reaching to level of posterior tip of pelvic fin; pectoral fin insertion well below midline of body; first pectoral filament shortest, not reaching to or extending slightly beyond level of posterior tip of pelvic fin; lengths of second to ninth pectoral filaments similar, extending beyond level of posterior tip of pelvic fin or level of anal fin origin, sometimes not reaching to level of posterior tip of pelvic fin; entire well-developed membranes present on dorsal margins of pectoral filaments; caudal fin deeply forked, upper and lower caudal fin lobes not filamentous; formula for configuration of supraneural bones, anterior neural spines, and anterior dorsal pterygiophores $/0/0+1/2/1 + 1/1/1/1/1/$; $10 + 14$ vertebrae.

Color when fresh.—Head and body pale green dorsally, silver ventrally; posterior margins of first and second dorsal fins dark yellow, remaining parts dusky; pectoral fin dusky; base of pectoral filaments white, becoming yellow on posterior tips; posterior tip of pelvic fin yellow, remaining parts white; base of anal fin white, remaining parts vivid yellow; lower caudal fin lobe dark yellow, upper lobe dusky.

Color of preserved specimens.—Head and body brown dorsally, yellowish-silver ventrally; first and second dorsal, pectoral, anal, and caudal fins uniformly pale yellow; pectoral filaments white.

Distribution and habitat. *Polydactylus opercularis* is currently known from the eastern Pacific Ocean (Fig. 2B), where it ranges from northern Los Angeles Harbor, California, USA, to off Paita, Peru (Hildebrand, 1946), being relatively rare north of Baja California, Mexico. The record from off Paita, Peru, was based on a single juvenile specimen (12 mm total length; Hildebrand, 1946). The species generally inhabits muddy or sandy bottoms in coastal waters and estuaries, but also occurs along sandy beaches (Allen and Robertson, 1994). Most of the collection data available indicate that the specimens were taken from depths less than 46 m.

Remarks. *Polydactylus opercularis* was originally described by Gill (1863) (as *Trichidion opercularis*) on the basis of a single specimen, which has apparently been lost. Although Gill (1863) gave no detailed locality for the holotype, the type locality having since been widely regarded only as “west coast of Central America,” Hildebrand (1946) noted the type locality of the species as Cape San Lucas, Baja California, Mexico. Because the holotype had been held in the National Museum of Natural History, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, DC, USA (see Gill, 1863: 162), the collections to which Hildebrand had considerable access (see Hildebrand, 1946: 6), there is every possibility that he had taken the information from a label stored with the holotype before its loss. Accordingly, the type locality of *Trichidion opercularis* is most likely Cape San Lucas, Baja California, Mexico.

According to the original description, *Trichidion opercularis* was characterized by having eight pectoral filaments and the anal fin tinged with orange, characteristics consistent with those of specimens considered here as

Polydactylus opercularis. Subsequently, Günther (1864) described *Polynemus melanopoma* as a new species from San José, Guatemala, on the basis of a single specimen (BMNH 1864.1.26.321, 263 mm SL; Fig. 1C). The taxonomic status of that species has remained unquestioned to date, the species having apparently been overlooked by subsequent researchers. Our examination of the holotype of *Polynemus melanopoma* and the specimens considered here as *Polydactylus opercularis* showed that they represented a single species (see Table 1). Accordingly, the former is herein regarded as a junior synonym of *Polydactylus opercularis*.

Seale and Bean (1907) overlooked Gill's (1863) *Trichidion opercularis* and described *Polydactylus opercularis* as a new species on the basis of a single specimen (USNM 57844, 124 mm SL) from Zamboanga, Mindanao, Philippines. Jordan and Richardson (1910) recognized this designation as a secondary homonym, thereby providing the replacement name, *Polydactylus sealei*, for Seale and Bean's *Polydactylus opercularis*. Although Jordan and Richardson (1910) considered Gill's *Trichidion opercularis* and Seale and Bean's *Polydactylus opercularis* as belonging to the same genus (*Polydactylus*), the former and latter are presently regarded as valid species, *Polydactylus opercularis* and *Filimanus sealei*, respectively (Feldes, 1991; this study).

Comparisons

Comparisons of *Polydactylus approximans* with related congeners. *Polydactylus approximans* and six Indo-Pacific *Polydactylus* species, *Polydactylus longipes* Motomura, Okamoto and Iwatsuki, *Polydactylus malagasyensis* Motomura and Iwatsuki, *Polydactylus nigripinnis* Munro, *Polydactylus persicus* Motomura and Iwatsuki, *Polydactylus sexfilis* (Valenciennes), and *Polydactylus sextarius* (Bloch and Schneider), are characterized by having 6 pectoral filaments (Motomura et al., 2000a, 2001a,g; Motomura and Iwatsuki, 2001b; Motomura and Senou, 2002). However, *Polydactylus approximans* is distinguished from the other six species by having a bifurcated lateral line (unbranched in the latter). The lateral line condition of *Polydactylus approximans* is also found in an Indian Ocean species, *Polydactylus bifurcus* Motomura, Kimura and Iwatsuki, and all three currently recognized western Atlantic species, *Polydactylus octonemus* (Girard), *Polydactylus oligodon* (Günther), and *Polydactylus virginicus* (Linnaeus) (see Motomura et al., 2001d: fig. 3A). *Polydactylus approximans* differs from the above four species in having usually 6 pectoral filaments (5 in *Polydactylus bifurcus*, usually 7 in *Polydactylus oligodon* and *Polydactylus virginicus*, and usually 8 in *Polydactylus octonemus*; Motomura et al., 2001d).

Polydactylus approximans has a scale-less maxilla, that character also being found in the three western Atlantic species and an eastern Atlantic species, *Polydactylus quadrifilis* (Cuvier), other congeners (distributed in the Indo-Pacific and eastern Pacific) having the maxilla with deciduous scales, the size and number of scales being both intra- and interspecifically variable.

unbranched, extending to upper end of lower caudal fin lobe); swimbladder present (absent).

Comparative material examined. All from Atlantic Ocean. *Polydactylus octonemus*: ANSP 22900 (syntype of *Polynemus octonemus* Girard), 62 mm SL; USNM 739 (2 syntypes of *Polynemus octonemus* Girard), 62–79 mm SL; USNM 15074 (holotype of *Trichidion octofilis* Gill), 166 mm SL; USNM 48883, 164 mm SL; USNM 93603 (2 specimens), 86–102 mm SL; USNM 155666, 126 mm SL; USNM 156107 (2), 73–113 mm SL; USNM 156112 (3 of 4 specimens), 73–114 mm SL; USNM 156119, 135 mm SL. *Polydactylus oligodon*: BMNH 1848.1.12.890 (paralectotype of *Polynemus oligodon* Günther; stuffed specimen), 146 mm SL; USNM 19961, 292 mm SL; USNM 120740, 135 mm SL; USNM 364370 (4), 111–113 mm SL. *Polydactylus quadrifilis*: ISH (at ZMH) 298-1959, 214 mm SL; MNHN 756 (holotype of *Polynemus quadrifilis* Cuvier; lacking caudal fin and half of caudal peduncle), 380 mm from anterior tip of snout to posterior end of remaining peduncle; MNHN 1906-0212, 189 mm SL; MNHN 1967-0789 (2), 181–231 mm SL; MNHN 1978-0355, 129 mm SL; MNHN 1979-0483, 147 mm SL; MNHN 1991-0918 (2), 128–132 mm SL; MNHN 1999-1104, 92 mm SL; MNHN 1999-1110, 74 mm SL; USNM 193684, 328 mm SL; USNM 320435, 153 mm SL. *Polydactylus virginicus*: MNHN 5504 (syntype of *Polynemus americanus* Cuvier), 141 mm SL; MNHN A. 3028 (syntype of *Polynemus americanus* Cuvier), 157 mm SL; MNHN A. 3031 (syntype of *Polynemus americanus* Cuvier), 121 mm SL; MSNG 6695 (holotype of *Polynemus antillarum* Perugia), 84 mm SL; USNM 9835, 155 mm SL; USNM 41324 (1 of 13 specimens), 149 mm SL; USNM 50145, 190 mm SL; USNM 79872 (2), 149–182 mm SL; USNM 79875, 186 mm SL; USNM 79877, 140 mm SL; USNM 156875, 189 mm SL; USNM 185186, 110 mm SL; USNM 185330, 136 mm SL; USNM 185454, 152 mm SL; USNM 186064 (3), 122–138 mm SL; USNM 290237, 157 mm SL; USNM 367193, 146 mm SL; USNM 367194, 167 mm SL. Comparative materials from Indo-Pacific are listed in Motomura et al. (2000a–c, 2001a–j, 2002a–c), Motomura and Iwatsuki (2001a,b), Motomura and Senou (2002), and Motomura and Sabaj (2002).

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