On the Supposed Occurrence in New Zealand of the North Pacific Fish Genus *Sebastodes*

While attending the Seventh Pacific Science Congress in New Zealand I presented a paper on what I proposed to call the "antitropical" elements in the marine faunas, using this generalized term to include what I have for some time been calling "pantemperate" as well as what has long passed under the rather misleading term "bipolar." Many patterns of antitropical ranges were indicated. My interest was consequently excited when, shortly afterward, I encountered two specimens in the Dominion Museum at Wellington that were labelled *Sebastodes maccullochi* Phillipps. If the genus *Sebastodes* should be found to occur also in New Zealand, we would have another example of antitropicality of a rather unique type. This large genus, except for one species or species group that ranges from Peru to South Africa, is strictly confined to the two sides of the North Pacific.

An examination of the somewhat complicated evidence indicates, however, that we do not have a new case of antitropical distribution. The specimens that I examined are referable to a well-known New Zealand species that cannot be included in *Sebastodes*. Nor do they represent the species that was described as *Sebastodes maccullochi* by Phillipps (*New Zealand Inst., Trans. and Proc.* 58: 127–128, pl. 3, fig. 2, 1927). Nor is that nominal species properly referred to *Sebastodes*. The type description and figure call for its reference to the genus *Helicolenus*. Although that genus is essentially pannemperate, a new example of antitropical distribution is not provided since *Helicolenus percoides* (Richardson) has long been recognized as a member of the faunas of New Zealand and Australia.

All characters evident in the description and figure of "*Sebastodes maccullochi*" agree with *Helicolenus* as currently defined, for instance by Barnhart and Hubbs (*Calif. Univ. Scripps Inst. Oceanography, Bul.* 5: 373–377, 385, 1946). There are only 12 dorsal spines (13, rarely 14, in *Sebastodes*) and 5 anal soft-rays (typically 6 to 9 in *Sebastodes*). The dorsal fin begins well backward on the nape, far behind the eye, and is not very deeply notched between the spiny and soft-rayed parts. The spines are not markedly elongated. The pectoral fin has a relatively narrow base, for the lower rays are not procurent. Some of the upper pectoral rays are branched (not simple as in *Pontinus*). The body is completely scaled and the head is largely scaled. The lateral line is complete.

In the absence of contrary evidence it can be assumed that the palatines are toothed. The head is relatively smooth, without deep caverns and high ridges, and with only moderately developed spines. The suborbital keel, developed anteriorly, is spineless. The border of the orbit is smooth.

Though a final identification should await thorough comparisons of specimens, it may be suggested that *Sebastodes maccullochi* Phillipps is probably a synonym of *Helicolenus percoides* (Richardson), the only species of *Helicolenus* now recognized from New Zealand. The type figure, from a photograph, certainly resembles very closely the drawing of *H. percoides* published by Waite (South Austral. Mus., Rec. 2: 162, fig. 266, 1921). Synonymies of that species have been given by Waite and by Phillipps (*New Zealand Mar. Dept. Fish Bull.* 1: 53, 1927).

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