

A POSTLARVA OF AN UNKNOWN FISH FROM THE WEST COAST OF SCOTLAND

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(Fig. 1)

A description is given of a postlarva from the west coast of Scotland which differs from that of any known species. From its general appearance and pigmentation it is probably the postlarva of an unrecorded species of blenny.

While examining collections of young fish taken with a 2 m stramin net on the west coast of Scotland in 1975 for the Dunstaffnage Marine Research Laboratory of the Scottish Marine Biological Association I found two postlarvae unlike any I have seen before.

These two specimens, both about 6.2 mm long, were taken on 31 July 1975 from the Tiree Passage between the Islands of Mull and Tiree, and from Bloody Bay on the south-west coast of Mull.

In general characteristics they are undoubtedly the postlarvae of a blenny. In their shape they resemble most closely the postlarva of *Blennius gattorugine* L., but they differ in their pigmentation, which is very striking. A description of the best preserved specimen (Fig. 1) is as follows.

The most obvious feature is a postanal ventral contour row of seven or eight large stellate melanophores, which are rather evenly spaced and start a short distance behind the anus. There are several elongated melanophores along the ventral and dorsal surfaces of the urostyle, and an internal dorsal row of elongated melanophores running forwards from the tail to about midway along the body.

The stomach is short, with black pigment over its dorsal surface, and there is a large melanophore on the anterior side of the anal papilla. There is a row of three melanophores on the pectoral fin and a large melanophore on the posterior side of the fleshy base of this fin. There are four or five melanophores on the head and one on the body in front of the insertion of the pectoral fin.

There is a pair of prominent teeth on the front of the upper jaw, and one on the lower jaw, from which another may be missing. There are about 37 myomeres, and the rudiments of the tail fin are just appearing on the ventral side of the urostyle which is just beginning to turn up.

No species of blenny, other than *Blennius ocellaris* L., *B. pholis* L., *B. gattorugine* and *Coryphoblennius galerita* (L.), has been recorded from the west coast of Scotland. Descriptions of postlarvae of these species do not fit the specimens under study. Recently, Wheeler & Dunne (1975) described a new species, *Tripterygion atlanticum*, from the English Channel whose postlarva is not known; but the postlarva of the nearly related species *T. tripteronotum* has been described by Padoa (1956) and this does not fit. However,

I am indebted to Dr Julie M. Fives who has pointed out to me that the specimen she described as *Coryphoblennius* species IV (Fives, 1970a, p. 72, fig. 15) bears a close resemblance. She later, wrongly she now thinks, ascribed that postlarva to *C. galerita* (Fives, 1970b), whose postlarva is most probably that figured in my monograph (Russell, 1976, p. 306, fig. 77). The postlarvae figured by Fives are most probably the same as those here described. Although the melanophores are not so expanded as in my specimens, their number and distribution is very similar.

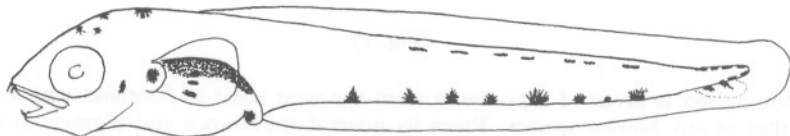


Fig. 1. Specimen collected from the west coast of Scotland on 31 July 1975.

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