

Order MYLIOBATIFORMES

American Round Stingrays or Round Rays

Family **UROTRYGONIDAE**

McEachran, Dunn & Miyake 1996



Urobatis pardalis, photographed by Jorge Cortés at Bajo Rojo, Bahía Salinas, Province of Guanacaste, Costa Rica. From: Del Moral-Flores, L. F., A. Angulo, M. I. López and W. A. Bussing. 2015. Nueva especie del género *Urobatis* (Myliobatiformes: Urotrygonidae) del Pacífico oriental tropical. *Revista de Biología Tropical* 63 (2): 501–514.

Urobatis

Garman 1913

uro, from *ourá* (Gr. οὐρά), tail, allusion not explained, possibly referring to blunt tail, “about as long as the body”; *batis* (Gr. βατίς), a flat fish, usually applied to a skate or ray

***Urobatis concentricus* Osburn & Nichols 1916** Latin for denoting circles that share the same center, referring to rounded pale spots on disc, which are “arranged more or less definitely in 3 concentric circles around a central one in the middle of the disc”

***Urobatis halleri* (Cooper 1863)** in honor of George Morris Haller (1851–1889), then the 12-year-old son of Major Granville O. Haller (1819–1897), who “was wounded on the foot, probably by one of these fish, while wading along a muddy shore” of San Diego Bay (California, USA) [see box, next page]

***Urobatis jamaicensis* (Cuvier 1816) -ensis**, Latin suffix denoting place: Jamaica, type locality

***Urobatis maculatus* Garman 1913** Latin for spotted, referring to dark-brown to blackish spots and blotches on dorsal surface

***Urobatis marmoratus* (Philippi 1892)** Latin for marbled, referring to color pattern, consisting of numerous small white spots on a dark background

***Urobatis pardalis* Del Moral-Flores, Angulo, López & Bussing 2015** párdalis (Gr. πάρδαλις), leopard, referring to its dorsal color pattern

(brown background with orange shades and white or pale vermiculations, sometimes merging to form spots or ocelli)

***Urobatis tumbesensis* (Chirichigno F. & McEachran 1979) -ensis**, Latin suffix denoting place: Tumbes, Peru, type locality

Urotrygon

Gill 1863

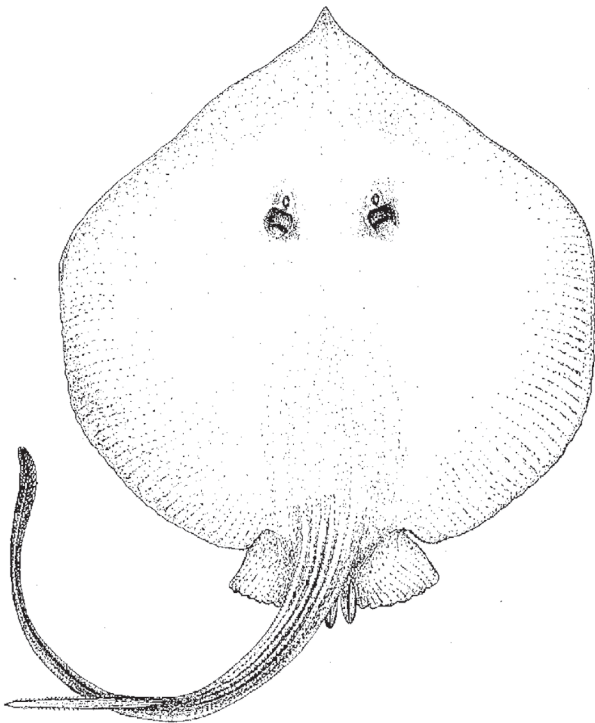
uro, from *ourá* (Gr. οὐρά), tail, allusion not explained, possibly referring to “longer tail” of *U. munda* compared with those of *Urolophus*; *trygón* (Gr. τρυγών), stingray, originating from *ptéryx* (Gr. πτέρυξ), wing¹, referring to the wing-like resemblance (and flying-like movement) of their pectoral fins

***Urotrygon aspidura* (Jordan & Gilbert 1882)** shield-tailed, from *aspídos* (Gr. ἀσπίδος), genitive of *aspís* (ἀσπίς), shield, and *ourá* (Gr. οὐρά), tail, referring to 2–8 strong, broad-rooted spines on tail

***Urotrygon chilensis* (Günther 1872) -ensis**, Latin suffix denoting place: Chile, type locality

***Urotrygon cimar* López S. & Bussing 1998** CIMAR, acronym for Centro de Investigación en Ciencias del Mar y Limnología, Universidad de Costa Rica (where both authors worked) in honor of its 20th anniversary

¹ Le Feuvre, C. 2011. Gr. τρυγών ‘1. turtledove; 2. stingray (fish)’: one word or two words? *Studia Etymologica Cracoviensia* 16 (1): 23–31. Some references say *trygón* means turtle dove. Le Feuvre presents evidence that *trygón* was originally two distinct words, meaning both stingray and turtle dove, that merged into one through the vicissitudes of phonological change; the semantic link between the two animals is accidental.



Urotrygon microphthalmum. From: Delsman, H. C. 1941. Résultats scientifiques des croisières du Navire-école Belge "Mercator", vol. III, No. 3. Pisces. Mémoires du Musée royal d'histoire naturelle de Belgique (Ser. 2) No. 21: 47–82.

***Urotrygon microphthalmum* Delsman 1941** *micro-*, from *mikrós* (Gr. μικρός), small; *ophthalmum*, from *ophthalmós* (Gr. ὀφθαλμός), eye (but spelled as if it were a neuter adjective, eyed), referring to its “small, remote” eyes, much smaller than spiracles

***Urotrygon munda* Gill 1863** Latin for clean, neat or nice, allusion not explained nor evident [originally spelled *mundus*, but *munda* agrees with feminine gender of *Urotrygon*]

***Urotrygon nana* Miyake & McEachran 1988** from *nanus* (L.), dwarf (a noun, but apparently treated as an adjective), referring to small adult size, 245–250 mm TL

***Urotrygon reticulata* Miyake & McEachran 1988** Latin for net-like or netted, referring to fine tan to brownish vermiculations on dorsal surface

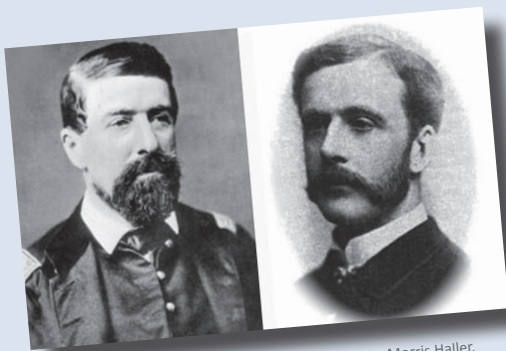
***Urotrygon rogersi* (Jordan & Starks 1895)** in honor of George Warren Rogers, “scholarly physician” who assisted the authors from his home in Mazatlán, Sinaloa, México, type locality

***Urotrygon simulatrix* Miyake & McEachran 1988** Latin for simulator (i.e., copy or imitation), referring to resemblance to *U. munda* in squamation and *U. chilensis* in morphometric characters

***Urotrygon venezuelae* Schultz 1949** of the Western Atlantic (Caribbean Sea) of Venezuela, type locality and only known area of occurrence

The Hallers of *Urobatis halleri*

The Round Stingray *Urobatis halleri* occurs in the coastal waters of the eastern Pacific, where its painful but non-fatal venomous spine is responsible for numerous injuries to bathers when they accidentally step on it. In fact, that’s how this stingray got its scientific name.



Left: Granville O. Haller. Right: His son, George Morris Haller.

Surgeon-naturalist James Graham Cooper (1830–1902) described the ray in 1863. He named it after the “little son” of Major Granville O. Haller (1819–1897) of the United States Army, who was “wounded in the foot, probably by one of these fish, while wading along a muddy shore of the bay. The wound was very painful for some hours, though small.”

The Hallers, father and son, both led interesting lives. The elder Haller fought Seminole Indians in Florida and Mexicans in Mexico, and achieved some level of fame as a hunter and hanger of insurrecting Indians. In 1863, Haller was in charge of the defense of south-central Pennsylvania during the early days of the Gettysburg Campaign of the American Civil War. At a wine-tasting party with a few light-headed officers, Haller made an imprudent but ambiguous remark that might have included President Abraham Lincoln’s name. He was accused of uttering “disloyal sentiments” and dismissed from the Army without a hearing. Haller fled this “unjust disgrace” by moving to Seattle, Washington, where he made a fortune in real estate, lumbering, farming, and general merchandising. Sixteen years later, a joint resolution of Congress exonerated Haller of any wrongdoing and reinstated him into the Army with the rank of colonel.

The “little son,” George Morris Haller, was born in 1851. According to one account, the 12-year-old boy fought alongside his father at Gettysburg, the bloodiest battle of the Civil War. In later life George became a prominent lawyer. He organized train and utility companies and served as assistant adjutant general of the Washington National Guard. When anti-Chinese riots broke out in Seattle in 1886, Haller helped to calm the mob and forestall a forced expulsion of the city’s Chinese immigrants.

It seems George had exceedingly bad luck in water. The boy who was stung by a stingray in 1863 drowned (along with two companions) when his canoe capsized in frigid water during a duck-hunting trip in 1889.