Order RHINOPRISTIFORMES

Guitarfishes

Family RHINOBATIDAE

Bonaparte 1835

Acroteriobatus

Gilby 1928

acroterio, etymology not explained, perhaps from acroterion, an architectural ornament placed on a flat pedestal and mounted at the apex or corner of the pediment of a building in the classical style, perhaps referring to the expanded nasal flaps (the main diagnostic character of the genus), which could be seen as an additional ornamental curtain; batus, Latinization of batis or batos, Greek for a flat fish, usually applied to a skate or ray

Acroteriobatus andysabini Weigmann, Ebert & Séret 2021 in honor of American philanthropist Andy Sabin, for his “gracious support” of the Lost Sharks project at the Pacific Shark Research Center

Acroteriobatus annulatus (Müller & Henle 1841) Latin for ringed, referring to white annular rings around body and tail

Acroteriobatus blochii (Müller & Henle 1841) in honor of German physician-ichthyologist Marcus Elieser Bloch (1723–1799), whose collection furnished the authors with a preserved specimen of this ray

Acroteriobatus leucospilus (Norman 1926) leukos (Gr.), white; spilos (Gr.) spot, referring to blue-gray spots on snout and pectoral fins

Acroteriobatus ocellatus (Norman 1926) Latin for having little eyes (ocelli), referring to numerous blue-gray eyespots, or ocelli, on back

Acroteriobatus omanensis Last, Henderson & Naylor 2016 -ensis, Latin suffix denoting place: Gulf of Oman, presumed type locality (obtained at a fish market in Muscat, Oman)

Acroteriobatus salalah (Randall & Compagno 1995) named for Salalah, Oman, where holotype was obtained at a fish market

Acroteriobatus stehmanni Weigmann, Ebert & Séret 2021 in honor of German ichthyologist Matthias Stehmann (b. 1943), Institut für Seefischerei (Hamburg), for his “invaluable contributions to chondrichthyan taxonomy, particularly with respect to skates”; he taught the first and third authors chondrichthyan taxonomy, collected all type specimens, and “kindly” provided photographs

Acroteriobatus variegatus (Nair & Lal Mohan 1973) Latin for “of different sorts,” particularly colors, referring to variegated markings of pectoral and pelvic margins

Pseudobatos

Last, Séret & Naylor 2016

pseudo-, from pseudes (Gr.), false; batos, Greek for a flat fish, usually applied to a skate or ray but used here as an abbreviated surrogate for Rhinobatos, referring to previous inclusion of most of its species in that genus, i.e., false Rhinobatos

Pseudobatos buthi Rutledge 2019 in honor of ichthyologist Donald Buth (b. 1949), University of California, Los Angeles, who provided Rutledge the opportunity to describe this species and whose support and guidance has been instrumental in her scientific career (see box, next page)

Pseudobatos glaucostigma (Jordan & Gilbert 1883) glaucus (L.), from glaukos (Gr.) bluish-green or gray, sea-colored, or hoary blue; stigma (Gr.), mark or spot, referring to numerous slate-colored spots on disc

Pseudobatos horkelii (Müller & Henle 1841) in honor of German physician-botanist Johann Horkel (1769–1846), who provided a preserved specimen from the University of Berlin

Pseudobatos lentiginosus (Garman 1880) Latin for full of freckles, referring to dense freckling of small pale spots on upper surface of body

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1 Simon Weigmann, pers. comm.
2 Peter R. Last, pers. comm.
In the 1940s and 1950s, ichthyologist Boyd Walker (University of California, Los Angeles) and colleagues caught 80 individuals of guitarfish during various collecting trips in the Gulf of California. Walker recognized these specimens as a possible new species but never examined them for quantifiable differences. In 2019, UCLA Ph.D. student Kelsi M. Rutledge quantified those differences and described a new species, *Pseudobatos buthi*, named in honor of her mentor and advisor, Donald Buth. The description appeared in the September 2019 issue of *Copeia*.

As the online version of *Copeia* became available, Rutledge decided to have some fun. She grabbed one of the museum specimens (preserved, not alive!) of her new species, went to the beach, and posed for several photographs of her and her new “baby.” She posted the photos on Twitter, writing “Welcome to the world P. buthi! I discovered a new species of ray called a guitarfish from the Gulf of California.”

Reaction was positive. “This could be the start of a brilliant new trend in scientific publication announcements,” wrote physicist David Mills.

“We’re starting to see more and more people taking creative approaches to getting the word out there,” David Shiffman told Smithsonian.com. He’s a marine conservation biologist and elasmobranch specialist who runs the Twitter account Why Sharks Matter. “Her photoshoot was one of the most hilarious things I’ve ever seen in that space.” Rutledge says her “silly” birth announcement has a serious objective. About 55 percent of guitarfishes are either threatened or near threatened for extinction.

“I am trying to raise awareness about this understudied group of fishes,” she says. She also wanted to draw more attention to taxonomy.

“Other scientists see [taxonomy] as boring or low impact, but I think people are starting to see it as funny,” Rutledge said. “I want people to realize this is fun. Taxonomy can be fun.”

“Other scientists see [taxonomy] as boring or low impact, but I wanted to highlight that taxonomy can be fun, and it is important.”

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**Pseudobatos leucorhynchus** (Günther 1867) from leukos (Gr.), white; rhynchus (Latinized Gr.), snouted, referring to pale areas on snout

**Pseudobatos percellens** (Walbaum 1792) Latin for smiting, allusion not explained, perhaps referring to Walbaum’s mistaken belief that it can produce an electric shock when held in the hand (“Quando manu tangi electrico ferit.”)

**Pseudobatos planiceps** (Aarman 1880) planus (L.), flat; ceps (New Latin), headed, referring to its broad, flat head

**Pseudobatos prahli** (Acero P. & Franke 1995) in honor of Henry von Prahl (1948–1989), Colombian marine biologist who studied Gorgona Island (type locality), and martyr of national biology (“mártir de la biología nacional”), presumably referring to his death in the bombing of Avianca Airlines Flight 203 over Bogotá

**Pseudobatos productus** (Ayres 1854) Latin for produced, referring to its pointed snout

**Rhinobatos**

Linck 1790

presumably tautonymous with Raja rhinobatos Linnaeus 1758 (no species mentioned); rhine, (Gr.), rasp, alluding to a shark’s jagged, rasplike skin; batos, Greek for a flat fish, usually applied to a skate or ray; referring to body form intermediate between that of a shark and ray

**Rhinobatos albomaculatus** Norman 1930 albus (L.), white; maculatus (L.), spotted, referring to white eye spots or ocelli on dorsal surface

**Rhinobatos annandalei** Norman 1926 in honor of British zoologist-anthropologist Thomas Nelson Annandale (1876–1924), Director, Indian Museum (Calcutta), who had published many papers on the fishes of India, including a 1909 account of this species

**Rhinobatos austini** Ebert & Gon 2017 in honor of “flat” shark enthusiast Austin Ebert (the senior author’s nephew) on the occasion of his graduation from the University of Southern California (his sister is similarly honored; see Pristiophorus lanae, Pristiophoriformes)

**Rhinobatos borneensis** Last, Séret & Naylor 2016 -ensis, Latin suffix denoting place: Malaysian Borneo (South China Sea), type locality, where specimens were first observed in a fish market

**Rhinobatos holcorhynchus** Norman 1922 holkos (Gr.), furrow, groove or track; rhynchos (Latinized Gr.), snouted, allusion not explained, presumably referring to widely separated rostral ridge

**Rhinobatos hynnicephalus** Richardson 1846 hynnis (Gr.), plowshare; cephalus (Latinized Gr.), headed, translation of its Chinese name, Lae tow sha (“Plough-headed sha”), referring to the shape of its head and acuminate snout

**Rhinobatos irvini** Norman 1931 in honor of British botanist Frederick Robert Irvine (1898–1962), who collected many fishes off the coast of West Africa, including holotype of this one

**Rhinobatos jimbaranensis** Last, White & Fahmi 2006 -ensis, Latin suffix denoting place: Jimbaran Bay, Indonesia, type locality

**Rhinobatos lionotus** Norman 1926 leios (Gr.), smooth; notos (Gr.), back, referring to minute skin denticles, presumably on dorsal surface, which are “smooth to the touch”

**Rhinobatos manai** White, Last & Naylor 2016 in honor of Ralph Mana,
University of Papua New Guinea, whose “invaluable work on the BioPapua projects throughout Papua New Guinea has led to a considerable increase in our knowledge of the deepwater fish fauna of this region”

Rhinobatos nudidorsalis last, Compagno & Nakaya 2004 nudus (L), bare or naked; dorsalis (L.), of the back, referring to smooth, denticle-free upper surface of body

Rhinobatos penggali last, White & Fahmi 2006 Indonesian for shovel, referring to head shape of this and other “shovelnose rays”

Rhinobatos punctifer last, Compagno & Randall 1987 punctum (L.), spot; ferro (L.), to have or bear, referring to prominent regular pattern of white spots on dorsum

Rhinobatos ranongensis last, Séret & Naylor 2019 -ensis, Latin suffix denoting place: Ranong fish landing (western Thailand), where first specimen was collected in 1994 and subsequently most of the types

Rhinobatos rhinobatos de, Linnaeus 1758 rhine, (Gr), rasp, alluding to a shark’s jagged, rasp-like skin; batos, Greek for a flat fish, usually applied to a skate or ray, referring to body form intermediate between that of a shark and ray

Rhinobatos sainsburyi last 2004 in honor of marine biologist Keith Sainsbury (b. 1952), for planning and managing the initial trawl surveys of the continental shelf of northwestern Australia, for recognizing the need to document the fauna before addressing more management-oriented questions, and for “pioneering research [that] provided an excellent regional biological baseline that would otherwise be unavailable for regional marine management”

Rhinobatos schlegelii müller & Henle 1841 in honor of German ornithologist-herpetologist Hermann Schlegel (1804–1884), for his willing support (“bereitwillige Unterstützung”) of the authors’ work

Rhinobatos whitei last, Corrigan & Naylor 2014 in honor of the authors’ colleague, Australian ichthyologist William T. White (b. 1977), for his contributions to the taxonomic and biological knowledge of sharks and rays of the Western Central Pacific

“Puraque,” upon which description of Pseudobatos percellens is based. From: Markgraf von Liebstadt, G. 1648. Historiae rerum naturalium brasiliae libri octo. In: Historiae naturalis brasiliae, auspicio et beneficio illustris. F. Hackius, Lugduni Batavorum (Leiden) and L. Elzevir (Elsevier), Amstelodami (Amsterdam). i–xii (unnumbered) + 1–327 + i–ii (unnumbered) + 1–226 + i (unnumbered). [Author’s name spelled Georgvs Marcgravus de Liebstad, also seen as Marcgrave or Marcgravus.]