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A Filefish New To Queensland
Balistoides viridescens (Bl. Schn.)

By GILBERT P. WHITLEY, F.R.Z.S.

(Contribution from the Australian Museum, Sydney)

Filefishes or triggerfishes (family Balistidae) are similar to leatherjackets, except that the bodies are covered with rough, hard scales, like the surface of a file; the trigger-like dorsal spines can be locked in an erect position by a bony mechanism worked by the muscles of the fish. They are said to be poisonous as food.

On 3rd December, 1949, Mr. A. McKeddle obtained a filefish, Balistoides viridescens (Bl. Schn.), at Trinity Beach, 14 miles north of Cairns, and photographs of it (here reproduced) by Mr. H. Chargets, were submitted to me for identification by the North Queensland Naturalists' Club (ref. no. 3613). The late A. R. McCulloch had collected another example many years ago on Cairns Reef, Cooktown, but the species has not hitherto been recorded from Australia.

Bloch & Schneider (Ryst. Ichth. 1801, P.477) originally described viridescens from Macritius. More than 100 years later it was named Pachynathus nigromarginatus Tanaka (Journ. Coll. Sci. Imp. Univ. Tokyo, xxii, 1908, art. 7, p.39, pl. i, fig.4) from Japan. The species has a wide range, the Australian Museum having specimens from Bali, Dutch New Guinea, Papua and the Andaman Islands. According to Herre (Philippine Journ. Sci. xxv, 1924) it reaches nearly one metre in length.

The generic name Balistoides was proposed for this species by Fraser-Brunner (Ann. Mag. Nat. Hist. (10) xv, 1935, pp.659 & 662).

Ten species of filefishes have so far been recorded from Queensland, but others are known to occur and should be sought and preserved. The ten known are:

- Balistes garnoti Cast.
- Sphyxmas fuscus (Latr.)
- Labalis chrysoterus (Bl. Schn.)
- Balistoides viridescens and conspicillum (Bl. Schn.) at Psuedo-balistes fucus (Bl. Schn.)
- Adultes stellatus (Anon.)
- Balistes aculeatus (Linn.)
- B. echape (Anon.) and B. undulatus (Park.)

Another New Saccolabium (Orchidaceae) From North Queensland

By the REV. H. M. R. RUPP, Willoughby, N.S.W.

S. subluteum, sp. nov.

Planta epiphytica, parva, caule e. 1 cm. longo, radicalibus paucis, oligoquanto crasis, Polia e. 3, usque ad 8 cm. longa, 15 mm. lata, acuta, crassa, Racemi pauci et brevissimi, crassissimi, vix 5 mm. longi, floribus usque ad 5. Pedic. cellum cum ovario 3 mm. longum. Bractea obtusa, viridis. Sepala petalique subulate, 3 mm. longa, petalis paullum angustiora quam sepalâ. Labellum album, trilobum, basatum sed lobis fere obsoletis; calcar lageniformis epistomico.
Saccolabium brevilabre (Mueller) Rupp

**NORTH QUEENSLAND NATURALIST**

A small epiphyte with a stem about 1 cm. long, and few rather thick roots. Leaves about 3, up to 8 cm. long, 15 mm. wide, acute. Thick, Johnston River, near Upper Daradgee, leg. S. F. Guesling-St. Cloud, 10/1952. Flowering at West Cairns 4/1953.

This new species, though small, is rather thick texture. Racemes few and very short and thick, hardly 5 mm. long, with 3 to 5 flowers. Petiole with the ovary 3 mm. long, Bract obtuse, green. Sepals and petals dull yellowish, 3 mm. long, the petals a little narrower than the sepals. Label-lum white, triporate, but the lobes almost obsolete; spur-flask-shaped with a small valve inside the orifice. Column short and not particularly attractive. It is very distinct from any other Australian Saccolabium. Its outstanding features are (1) the unusually short and stout racemes, with few flowers, and (2) the dull yellowish colour of the perianth. Mr. St. Cloud discovered it while searching for a Vanda which had been reported on the Johnston River, but which he was unable to find.

**A Note On the Orchid Saccolabium Breuilabre (F. Mueller) Rupp.**

By the REV. H. M. R. RUPP, Willoughby, N.S.W.

This small Queensland epiphyte was placed by Mueller (Pfagm. XI, 87) in the genus Cleisostoma, now regarded as obsolete. The locality was Mount Dryander, in the Proserpine district of North Queensland, the collector being Fitzalan. In "The Breaking Up of the Genus Cleisostoma in Australia" (Vic. Nat. 57 (1941) 216), the present writer removed C. brevilabre to the genus Saccolabium. At present three Australian species are recognised in this genus: S. brevilabre (F. Mueller) Rupp, S. loaderanum and S. brevilabre is seen to be far more extensive than was supposed; from Yungaburra to Noosa it is probably not far short of 700 miles. It is also a more variable plant than was realised. The stem may be elongated to about 12 cm. In MacPherson's Mt. Dryander plant, which was flowering very freely, it hardly exceeded 2 cm. Mueller gave no indication of the colouring of the flowers. The dominant colour appears to be a very light green, but this may be dextral or suffused in varying degrees by a rich red-brown, and the stigma is flanked on each side by a ridge of purple, which is sometimes very bright and sometimes pale.

Tableland, N. F. Loader collected it in this locality in 1952. In 1945, the late C. T. White forwarded a plant from Noosa, in Southern Queensland, asking for confirmation of his opinion (which was quite correct) that it was S. brevilabre. This brought the range of the species some 400 miles S. of Mt. Dryander; and it was found again at Noosa by T. E. Hunt in 1946. Finally, A. Johnson sent specimens in 1952 from Bambaroo, between Townsville and Ingham. Thus the distribution of S. brevilabre is undoubtedly S. loaderanum. The latter is a dark green plant with very obulate leaves, and a stem reaching 18 cm. S. brevilabre is light green, with acute leaves. In S. loaderanum the valvular appendage of the spur is just inside the orifice; in S. brevilabre it is half-way between the orifice and the apex. In the latter species the rostellum is remarkably conspicuous, protruding just above the stigma and furnished with a bifid or even trifid tip.

Saccolabium subluteum Rupp

The nearest relative of S. brevilabre is undoubtedly S. loaderanum. The latter is a dark green plant with very obulate leaves, and a stem reaching 18 cm. S. brevilabre is light green, with acute leaves. In S. loaderanum the valvular appendage of the spur is just inside the orifice; in S. brevilabre it is half-way between the orifice and the apex. In the latter species the rostellum is remarkably conspicuous, protruding just above the stigma and furnished with a bifid or even trifid tip.
Balistoides viridescens (Bl. Schn.)

Photo by H. Cargols
An Exceptionally Large Stone Axe Head

By KEITH KENNEDY, Museum of Music, Townsville

In the North Queensland Naturalist of 1st March, 1950, there is described a large grooved axe-head from the Tully Falls. Since then, the Museum of Music, Townsville, has acquired one much larger, found July, 1951, by Mr. Charles Freeman, of the Townsville Orchid Society, partly buried in the ground at Double-Barrel Creek, near Billyana, Upper Murray River, N.Q. It is ovate in outline and lenticular in section, but has no groove as has the Tully specimen. The illustration gives an idea of its size.

Measurements are: Length 46 cm., greatest thickness 3.75 cm., which occurs at a distance of 30 cm. from the butt end. From there the blade thins down to the cutting edge. Weight 14 lbs. 1 oz.

An axe of this size would seem to be too heavy for practical use, but it must be remembered that the North Queensland rain forest aborigines also made very large and cumbersome wooden swords and yet were able to use them. If not for use it might have been made for ceremonial purposes. So far, there is no record of the aborigines using ceremonial axes, but that does not rule out the possibility that they might have done so during their secret rites.

Then there is the personal element, for it might have been made by an aborigine wishing to have something bigger and more imposing than those of his fellows. As far as I know, no person has recorded seeing any of these large axes in use, and until evidence is obtained as to why they were made, their function must remain a matter of conjecture.

Large Stone Axe Head

MEETINGS AND FIELD DAYS

June, 1952: Miss Nancy Hopkins described her experiences as naturalist on the journey from Mataranka to Alice Springs. The trip covered the Upper Roper River, Elsey Station, Daly Waters, Newcastle Waters and Elliott and Longreach Lagoons. Around Alice Springs she explored the McDonnell Ranges and visited Hermannsburg, which had turned into a "dust bowl" by the cutting down of its trees. She gave a vivid description of the natural features and flora and fauna of the country traversed and told how she saw some aboriginal red hand marks on a bridge, made by the blacks blowing some red ochre over the paint. This was followed by monthly botany class by Mr. Kennedy when he spoke on indigent dry fruits. As he showed the specimens he stressed that it was impossible to study properly unless actual specimens were examined.

The Field Day was to Mt. Stuart, July, 1952: Mr. C. Freeman spoke on the many forms, distribution and evolution of cacti, and explained their various devices to conserve moisture, enabling them to survive dry seasons. Specimens of some rare cacti were shown and their peculiarities pointed out, after which pictures of the larger species, including the giant cactus of Arizona, Mr. Selvyge read his report. Mr. Kennedy spoke about roots and their variations, and specimens of aerial, clinging, parasitic, buttress, air breathing, and many other roots were shown. The Field Day was to the Town Common.

August, 1952: Miss N. Hopkins spoke on the birds of Mataranka, where she spent several weeks studying the avifauna. She noted two sharply divided types of country—thick jungle of the river banks and furnace of the dry lands—each with distinctive bird life vividly described, illustrated on the spot, the details of markings and colourings.

The Field Day was to Pallar-enda.

September, 1952: Annual General Meeting. Retiring Committee members were unanimously elected with the addition of Mrs. D. Caldwell. A list of birds observed by Miss Hopkins and club members during bird week was forwarded to the Bird Observers' Club, Melbourne.

The Field Day was to Three Mile and Pallarenda.

October, 1952: Mr. S. Brock gave a very interesting talk on a recent trip to Bowen and district, where he collected many beautiful shells which he exhibited, indicating localities. Mr. A. Dann showed coloured lantern slides of Victorian wild flowers of the Castlemaine District, also some Palm Island pictures. Miss Hopkins exhibited nests of leaf-cutter bees (Megachelidae) and other entomological specimens.

The Field Day was to Mrs. Freeman's, to inspect her Cacti Collection.

November, 1952: Members' night when the Dingo, Canis familiaris antarcticus was discussed. A letter was addressed to the Mayor of Townsville from U.S.A. was referred to the Club. Mr. K. Kennedy read a paper on the subject. Remains of the dingo have been found in certain caves associated with those of the Thylacine and other marsupials now extinct on the mainland, indicated that the dingo had been in Australia for a considerable time and was probably introduced by the early aborigines.

The Field Day was a Members' Field Day.

December, 1952: Mr. Kennedy spoke on the influence or arrangement of flowers, whether forming a spectacular display of hundreds of blooms to a solitary flower, all illustrated by specimens. Xan-