

Reef sites

First record of the basslet *Gramma dejongi* outside of Cuba



Fig. 1 *Gramma dejongi* individual at Little Cayman



Fig. 2 *Gramma dejongi* individual among several *G. loreto* individuals at Little Cayman

The basslet *Gramma dejongi*, a recently discovered sibling species to the fairy basslet (*G. loreto*), was regarded as endemic to Cuba (Victor and Randall 2010). Here we report the first documented sightings of *G. dejongi* at Little Cayman Island. The Cayman Islands are located on an oceanic ridge that extends southwest from the Sierra Maestra Mountains in southeastern Cuba. Situated approximately 220 km due south of Cuba, Little Cayman and Cayman Brac are the closest islands to the town of Trinidad, where *G. dejongi* was first reported (Victor and Randall 2010). A single *G. dejongi* individual (Fig. 1) was first sighted in July 2013 among a group of *G. loreto* (Fig. 2) and was visually identified by comparing its morphology and coloration to those described by Victor and Randall (2010).

The Little Cayman specimen was 60 mm in total length, exceeding the maximum size reported for the species (i.e., 45 mm, Victor and Randall 2010). The individual was found at 18 m on a spur-and-groove formation 1.5 km east of the Bloody Bay Marine Park. We located the same *G. dejongi* individual in August 2013 at the exact site where it was first observed, suggesting the species is highly site-attached. Like *G. loreto*, the Little Cayman *G. dejongi* specimen was repeatedly observed upside down. Our observations indicate that second-hand reports of smaller size and vertical-swimming behavior in the original description of *G. dejongi* may not be diagnostic (Victor and Randall 2010).

The discovery of a single *G. dejongi* individual in the Cayman Islands does not imply that large-scale recruitment of the species has occurred in the area. However, sighting *G. dejongi* outside of Cuba does suggest that the species is capable of dispersing pelagically to nearby islands.

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References

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