TENTACULUS WALTAIRIENSIS RAO AND DUTT, 1965, A JUNIOR SYNONYM OF *PHOLIOIDES THOMASENI* NIELSEN 1960 (PISCES: HALIOPHIDAE). — Nielsen (1960) described the genus *Pholioides* to accommodate *P. thomaseni*, a new blennioid fish he based on five specimens from rock pools near Karachi, Pakistan. This species, as he remarked, "is the first record of a representative of the Haliophidae from between the Red Sea and the Philippines." Members of the family, however, have been recorded from Arsu Island, northwest of Australia, and from the east coasts of Africa and Madagascar.

Recently Rao and Dutt (1965) described a new genus and species of Haliophidae, *Tentaculus waltairiensis*, based on one specimen from Waltair, Andhra Pradesh, India and four specimens from Okha, Gujerat, India, collected from rock pools. *T. waltairiensis* is identical with *Pholioides thomaseni* and evidently the authors were not aware of the earlier description of the fish by Nielsen (1960). According to the rule of priority, *Tentaculus* becomes a junior synonym of *Pholioides* and *T. waltairiensis* becomes a junior synonym of *P. thomaseni*.

Between 1962–1964, I was able to collect 21 specimens of *Pholioides thomaseni* from Rupan Coast (ten miles south of Okha), Pirotan Island (Gulf of Kutch), and Kiew Point (three miles from Okha), along with several other blennioid fishes, a brief report of which will be published elsewhere. A specimen of *P. thomaseni* was sent in 1964 to the U. S. National Museum (No. 198209) at the request of Dr. Victor G. Springer.

Nielsen (*op. cit.*), while placing *Pholioides* in the family Haliophidae, to which it is most closely related, stated that he was doing so with some hesitation because *Pholioides* differs from the other members of the family in the absence of teeth on the vomer. He felt that this difference might indicate that *Pholioides* represented a separate family. Further, *P. thomaseni* and *Haliophis malayanus*

M. Weber do not have a differentiated tail, although this character is also indicated by Smith (1952) as one of the diagnostic characters of the family Haliophidae. Hence the definition of the family Haliophidae should be altered to exclude the above characters from the family diagnosis.

An examination of my specimens shows that the interorbital cirri for which Rao and Dutt (*op. cit.*) use the term "tentacle," is not present in all specimens. In the 21 specimens I had collected the interorbital cirri are well developed in 12, absent in three, and in varying degrees of development in six. There appears also to be considerable variation in the vertebral count of the species. While the prehaemal count of 17 is constant in all specimens examined by Nielsen (*op. cit.*) and Rao and Dutt (*op. cit.*), the haemal count is 46 in the holotype, 50 in one paratype, and 49 in the other paratypes. The latter authors give a count of 47 in their specimens. Some color variation has been noticed, reference to which has already been made by these authors.

Literature Cited

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