

CSIRO MARINE LABORATORIES
Report 243

CHECKLIST OF PHILIPPINE CHONDRICHTHYES

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CHECKLIST OF PHILIPPINE CHONDRICHTHYES

Compagno, L.J.V.¹, Last, P.R.², Stevens, J.D.², and Alava, M.N.R.³

¹ Shark Research Center, South African Museum, Iziko–Museums of Cape Town, PO Box 61, Cape Town, 8000, South Africa

² CSIRO Marine Research, GPO Box 1538, Hobart, Tasmania, 7001, Australia

³ Species Conservation Program, WWF-Phils., Teachers Village, Central Diliman, Quezon City 1101, Philippines (former address)

ABSTRACT

Since the first publication on Philippines fishes in 1706, naturalists and ichthyologists have attempted to define and describe the diversity of this rich and biogeographically important fauna. The emphasis has been on fishes generally but these studies have also contributed greatly to our knowledge of chondrichthyans in the region, as well as across the broader Indo–West Pacific. An annotated checklist of cartilaginous fishes of the Philippines is compiled based on historical information and new data. A Taiwanese deepwater trawl survey off Luzon in 1995 produced specimens of 15 species including 12 new records for the Philippines and a few species new to science. Soon after, a major survey of fish markets in the southern Philippines, funded by the World Wildlife Fund, resulted in the collection and storage of specimens of 54 species, of which 41 were new records for the Philippines. Approximately 164 species representing 44 families and 83 genera of cartilaginous fishes have been recorded from Philippine seas from all available sources. The checklist includes 129 valid species records that are based on specimens and unambiguous literature accounts, and 35 additional doubtful records that are mostly based on literature. Of the valid species, about 111 were wholly or partly based on literature records; 109 species wholly or partly on specimens from all sources including museum collections. At least 24 species, mostly collected during the recent surveys, are new to science. An historical overview of research on Philippine cartilaginous fishes is provided, along with sections on the classification, habitat and distribution of the fauna, and a listing of species of conservation concern.

INTRODUCTION

The Indo–West Pacific has the richest diversity of marine species in the world (Carpenter & Paxton, 1999) and possibly the most diverse chondrichthyan fauna. It also has some of the most heavily exploited sharks and rays and amongst the least well known species in terms of their resource size and biology. Much of the region, particularly the deepwater continental slopes and basins, have never been explored. Hence, the taxonomic knowledge of the region's fishes needs improving to provide an adequate baseline for data acquisition and resource management. Probably, no where more than in the Philippines is this data more urgently needed. Inshore fish stocks are very heavily fished and potentially vulnerable species, such as whale sharks and mantas, are being harvested without being adequately managed.

Knowledge of the Philippine chondrichthyans is based largely on literature records compiled from studies of the broader fish fauna. Fishes were collected from the region in the early 19thC and sent to European museums to be identified and named. An historical account of this research to the end of the 20thC is given below. More recently, this knowledge has been expanded greatly to include new data collected from a deepwater trawl survey off the northeastern Philippines, and a series of targeted surveys of elasmobranchs from southern Philippine fish markets.

The seas of the Indo–West Pacific have been the subject of much interest for their mega-diversity for the past few centuries. In October 1995, a workshop funded by the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) was convened in Manila to prepare and test sections of a six volume, FAO species identification guide for fisheries purposes to the fauna of the Western Central Pacific (Carpenter & Niem, *eds.*, 1998–2001). Prior to the workshop, specimens were collected from fish markets across the Philippines and sent to the ICLARM offices in Quezon City for study. To coincide with and to supply material to the workshop, a Taiwan Fisheries