

Presence of the deep-bodied pipefish, *Leptonotus blainvillleanus* (Eydoux & Gervais, 1837) [Syngnathiformes: Syngnathidae], in San Jorge Gulf, Patagonia, Argentina

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ABSTRACT

This short report communicates the finding of a Deep-bodied pipefish, *Leptonotus blainvillleanus*, (Eydoux & Gervais, 1837) [Syngnathiformes, Syngnathidae] in shallow waters of the San Jorge Gulf, Patagonia Argentina, in August 2010. It's a new record for its known distribution range in the coast of South America. Photos and videos are available.

Keywords: Pipefish; Syngnathidae; *Leptonotus blainvillleanus*; San Jorge Gulf; Coastal Cold-Temperate Waters; Patagonia Argentina

This note communicates the finding, on August 7, 2010, of a Deep-bodied pipefish, *Leptonotus blainvillleanus* (Eydoux & Gervais, 1837) (Syngnathiformes, Syngnathidae) [1,2]; in shallow waters of the San Jorge Gulf (Argentina); about 20 kilometers to the South of the town of Rada Tilly (46°2'30.32"S - 67°35'45.02"W, see **Figure 1**).

Leptonotus blainvillleanus presents a distribution that runs from the South of Brazil (in the Atlantic) to the South of Chile (in the Pacific). They are benthic fish, generally found in algae beds in estuaries or coastal areas. They are difficult to see, since they are easily confused with algae. They feed on small crustaceans and small fish. They are ovoviviparous, and the male carries the eggs in a brood pouch which is found under the tail [3].

The specimen, a male of about 20 centimeters of total length (see **Figure 2**), was found swimming near the bottom, in a tidal channel. At the time the water had a temperature of 6°C, and the depth did not exceed 3 meters. The fish was swimming in a vertical position, and photos and videos were taken before releasing it (photos and videos are available; contact: ari_apezteguia@yahoo.com.ar).

This finding confirms the presence of *Leptonotus blainvillleanus* in waters of the San Jorge Gulf; resulting in a new record for its known distribution range [4]; as in South America it has been reported in coastal waters, up to 25 meters depth, on the southwest coast of the Atlantic, South to the San José Gulf (Argentina, 42°30' S); and it is estimated that it reaches at least to the North of Chile and possibly to the South of Peru in the Southeast Pacific [5] (See **Figure 3**).

Although the conservation status of *L. blainvillleanus* still has not been assessed by the IUCN, it's found in shallow waters of San Jorge Gulf, whose coastal environment is well preserved and with abundant seaweed beds, suggesting that it could support persistent populations of the

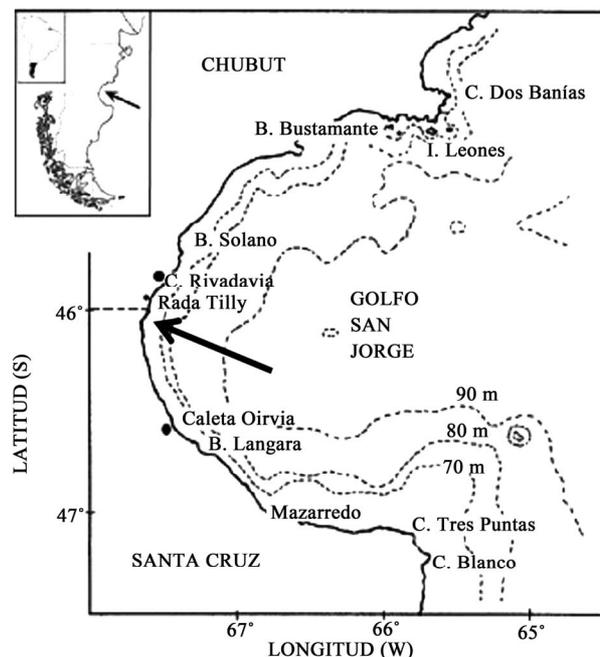


Figure 1. Site where the specimen of *L. blainvillleanus* was found in August 2010.



Figure 2. Picture of the specimen of *Leptonotus blainvillleanus* found in August 2010.

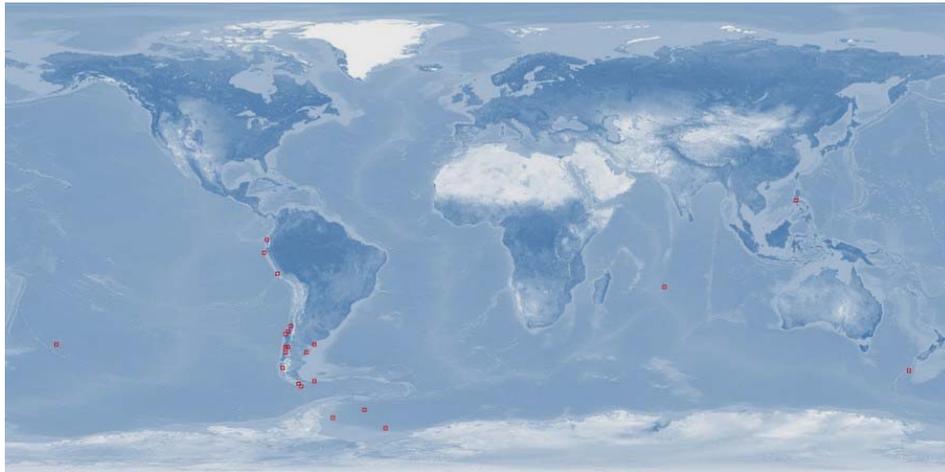


Figure 3. Computer generated map for *Leptonotus blainvillleanus* (www.aquamaps.org. Web accessed 26 December 2011).

species. Confirming this report, a second specimen was found in April 2011, near Punta del Marqués ($45^{\circ}57'14.53''S$ - $67^{\circ}32'17.02''W$), swimming between meadows of seaweed at about 8 meters of depth.

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