



Mixed Infection of an Acid-fast Bacterium and an Imperfect Fungus in a Napoleon Fish (*Cheilinus undulatus*)

Authors: Wada, Shinpei, Hatai, Kishio, Tanaka, Eri, and Kitahara, Tohru

Source: Journal of Wildlife Diseases, 29(4) : 591-595

Published By: Wildlife Disease Association

URL: <https://doi.org/10.7589/0090-3558-29.4.591>

BioOne Complete (complete.BioOne.org) is a full-text database of 200 subscribed and open-access titles in the biological, ecological, and environmental sciences published by nonprofit societies, associations, museums, institutions, and presses.

Your use of this PDF, the BioOne Complete website, and all posted and associated content indicates your acceptance of BioOne's Terms of Use, available at www.bioone.org/terms-of-use.

Usage of BioOne Complete content is strictly limited to personal, educational, and non - commercial use. Commercial inquiries or rights and permissions requests should be directed to the individual publisher as copyright holder.

BioOne sees sustainable scholarly publishing as an inherently collaborative enterprise connecting authors, nonprofit publishers, academic institutions, research libraries, and research funders in the common goal of maximizing access to critical research.

Mixed Infection of an Acid-fast Bacterium and an Imperfect Fungus in a Napoleon Fish (*Cheilinus undulatus*)

Shinpei Wada,¹ Kishio Hatai,¹ Eri Tanaka,² and Tohru Kitahara,² ¹ Division of Fish Diseases, Nippon Veterinary and Animal Science University, Kyohnan-cho 1-7-1, Musashino, Tokyo 180, Japan; ² Yomiuri Land Marine Aquarium, Yanokuchi 3294, Inagi, Tokyo 206, Japan

ABSTRACT: A Napoleon fish (*Cheilinus undulatus*) was infected with both an acid-fast bacterium and an imperfect fungus. This is the first report of an acid-fast bacterial infection in *Cheilinus undulatus*, and the first observation of an imperfect fungus in the swim bladder of a tropical marine fish.

Key words: Napoleon fish, acid-fast bacterium, imperfect fungus, histopathology, *Cheilinus undulatus*.

Napoleon fish (*Cheilinus undulatus*) are frequently exhibited in commercial Japanese aquariums. There is no information, however, on the diseases of this species. This is the first known report of a simultaneous infection with *Mycobacterium* sp. and an imperfect fungus in Napoleon fish (*Cheilinus undulatus*).

The Napoleon fish was a male weighing 14.6 kg, with a total body length of 934 mm, captured at Padang Bay, Indonesia (8°15'S, 115°29'E) in May 1990. The fish was transported to a dealer in Shizuoka Prefecture, Japan, in June 1990, and reared in a concrete aquarium. In April 1991 the fish was introduced to the Yomiuri Land Marine Aquarium, Tokyo, Japan.

The fish died three days after arriving at the aquarium and was necropsied immediately. Heart, liver, kidney, and swim bladder were fixed in 10% phosphate-buffered formalin, embedded in paraffin, and sectioned at 4 to 5 μ m. Sections were stained with hematoxylin and eosin. Some sections also were stained by the Ziehl-Neelsen

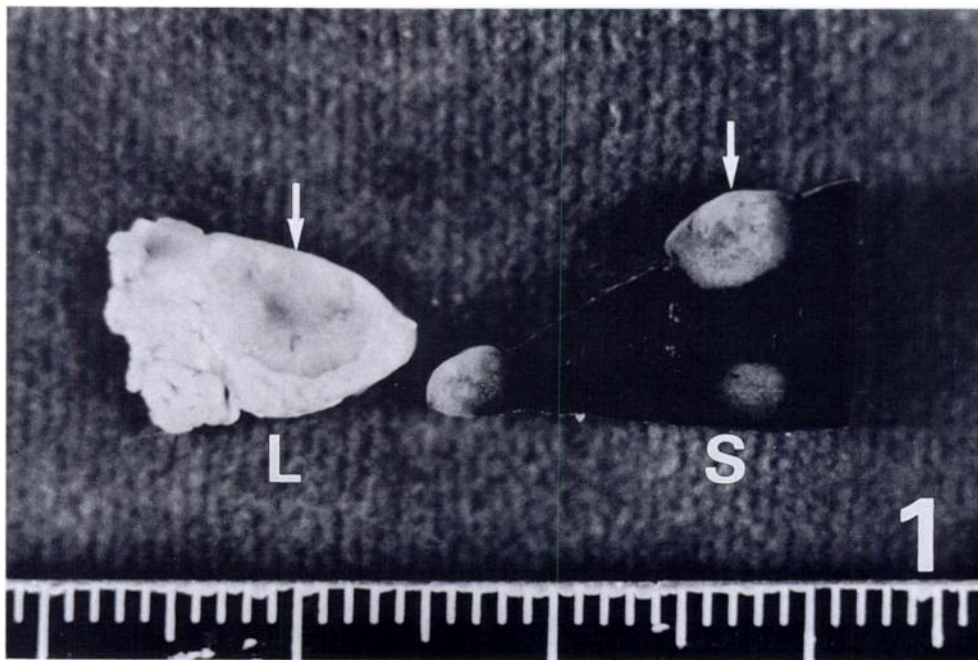


FIGURE 1. Cut surfaces of the liver (L) and the spleen (S) with white nodules (arrows). Small units on bar = 1 mm.

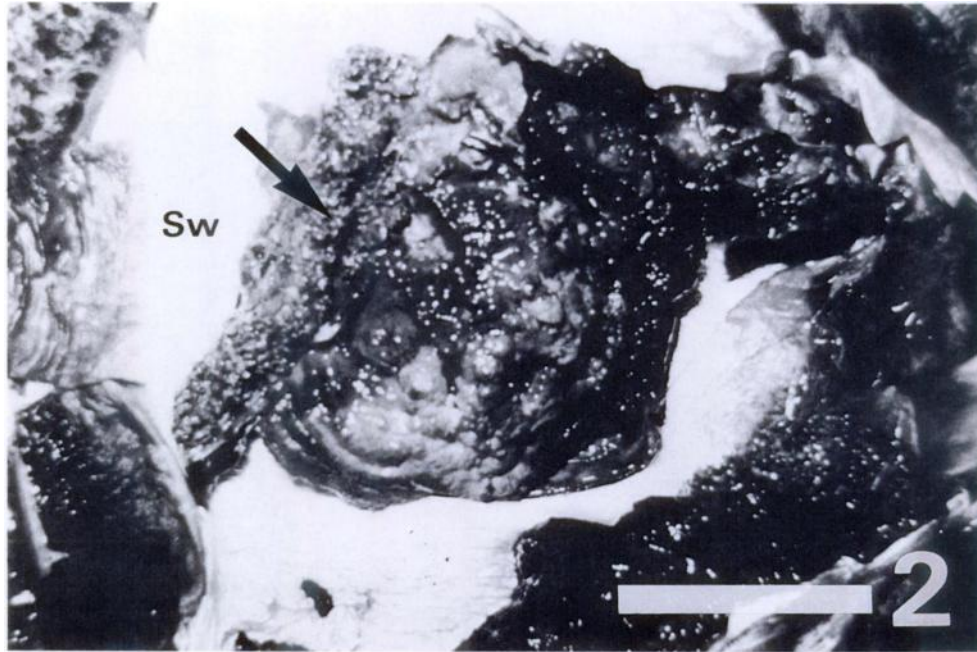


FIGURE 2. Swim bladder with large brown flat mass with rough surface (arrow). Sw, the wall of the swim bladder. Bar = 5 cm.

method for acid-fast bacteria and decolorized with 3% hydrochloric acid in 70% alcohol (Kageyama and Watanabe, 1978); we also used the Hucker-Conn method for bacteria (Kageyama and Watanabe, 1978), the periodic acid Schiff (PAS) reaction (Okudaira, 1985), the methenamine silver-nitrate-Grocott's variation (Grocott, 1955), and the Schmorl method (Naoe and Kuroiwa, 1977) on some sections.

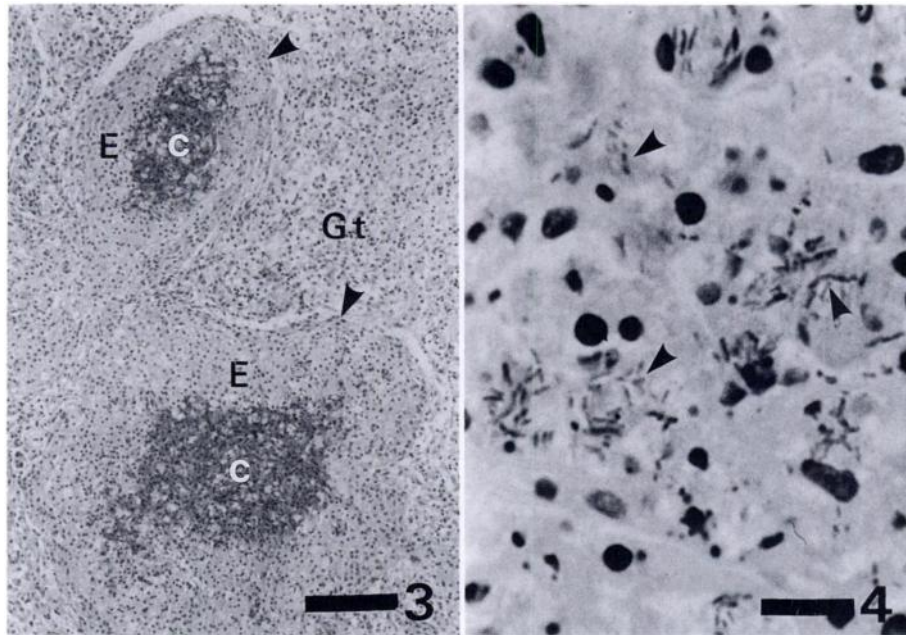
There were a number of abrasions on the body surface. No other clinical signs were observed.

The liver had a yellow discoloration and white nodules, 4 to 5 mm in diameter, on its capsule. Nodules similar in color, and 0.5 to 1.0 cm in diameter, also were observed in the spleen. These nodules extended into the parenchyma of both organs (Fig. 1).

In the swim bladder, a large brown flat mass with a rough surface, approximately 15 cm in diameter, was attached to the inner wall of the bladder (Fig. 2). Fungal hyphae were observed in small pieces of the mass, using light microscopy.

Isolation of the bacterium and the fungus from these lesions was not attempted. No gross lesions were observed in the other organs.

The white nodules in the liver and the spleen were chronic proliferative lesions composed of multiple caseous granulomata with surrounding granulation tissue (Fig. 3). Histologically, similar lesions also were found in the parenchyma of the liver and the spleen. The granuloma was composed of a central caseous area and a surrounding layer of ovoid to spindle-shaped epithelioid cells, but no giant cells were observed in these tissues. The granulation tissue surrounding the granulomas was composed of macrophages, eosinophilic granulocytes (EGC's), and fibroblasts. The EGC's contained weakly eosinophilic, small multiple granules and an eccentric non-lobed nucleus. Loose connective tissue existed in the boundary region between the granulomas and the granulation tissue, and the marginal region of the granulation tissue. In the central caseous area, a number of colonies of slender, long, Gram + rods



FIGURES 3 and 4. Figure 3. Liver. Caseous granulomas (arrow heads) with surrounding granulation tissue (Gt). E, epithelioid cell layer. C, central caseous area. H&E. Bar = 100 μ m. Figure 4. Acid-fast bacteria (arrow heads) in the central caseous area of the granulomas. Ziehl-Neelsen. Bar = 10 μ m.

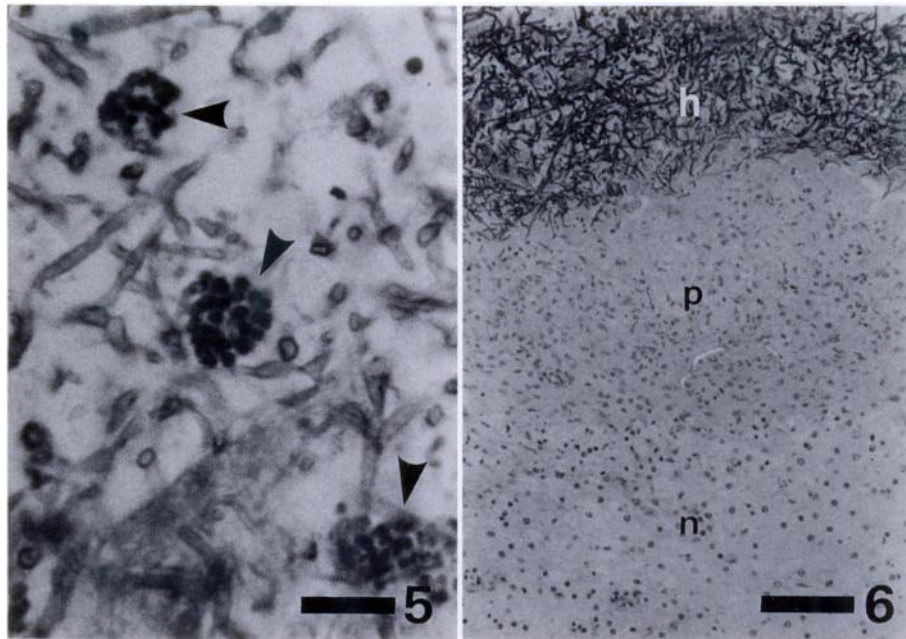
were found to be acid-fast by the Ziehl-Neelsen method (Fig. 4). These acid-fast bacteria also were observed in the epithelioid cells and in the macrophages of the granulation tissue. Similar chronic proliferative lesions associated with acid-fast bacteria were not detected in other organs.

The central region of the swim bladder mass was occupied almost completely by mats of fungal hyphae with many clusters of round-shaped conidia, 1.5 to 2.1 μ m in diameter (Fig. 5). The hyphae were branched, septate, and of irregular width; in paraffin sections the hyphae were 1.0 to 2.0 μ m in width. Although the hyphae were clearly stained with PAS and Grocott's preparation, the hyphae were not stained positively by the Schmorl method. The marginal region of the mass was composed of elongated hyphae and chronic proliferative lesions. The lesion contained epithelioid granulomata around the elongated hyphae and a wide area of granulation tissue, but had no giant cells (Fig. 6).

The granulation tissue around the epithelioid granulomata was composed of macrophages, EGC's, lymphocytes, fibroblasts, and newly generated capillaries; it was encapsulated by loose connective tissue. The hyphae did not reach either the epithelioid cell layer or the granulation tissue (Fig. 6). The lesion associated with the fungus was not observed in other organs.

In fishes, acid-fast bacteria cause various lesions and many infections have typical epithelioid granulomas without giant cells (Mori et al., 1986; Chinabut et al., 1990). Granulomas associated with the acid-fast bacteria described in this paper were similar to those reported by previous workers, but differed by having a wide area of granulation tissue surrounding them. From their morphological characteristics of the acid-fast bacteria, it is highly probable that the bacteria are *Mycobacterium* sp.

From its morphological characteristics, the fungus in the swim bladder was con-



FIGURES 5 and 6. Figure 5. Note clusters of round shaped conidia (arrow heads) in central region of the mass in the swim bladder. PAS reaction. Bar = 10 μm . Figure 6. Epithelioid cell granuloma found in the marginal region of the swim bladder mass. Note three layers of the granuloma; mats of fungal hyphae (h), pyknotic epithelioid cell layer (p), and non-pyknotic epithelioid cell layer (n). PAS reaction. Bar = 50 μm .

sidered to be an imperfect fungus. Imperfect fungi have been reported as a cause of local and systemic infection in marine fish (Hatai, 1989).

Of these fungal agents, *Exophiala pisciphila* (Gaskins and Cheung, 1986), *Aureobasidium* sp. (Otte, 1964) and *Sarcinomyces crustaceus* (Todaro et al., 1983) have been classified as dematiaceous fungi (Hawksworth et al., 1983). Naoe and Kuroiwa (1977) observed that dematiaceous fungi are stained positively by the Schmorl method. However, the fungus reported in this paper was Schmorl negative. Further, we could not detect the canoe-shaped macroconidia characteristic of the genus *Fusarium* (Nelson et al., 1983). Therefore, we believe that the fungus in the lesion was a new fungus from fish; we could not determine its identity nor its mode of invasion into the swim bladder. Fungal infections of the swim bladder previously have been found in hatcheries, but not in ma-

rine fish (Bruno, 1989). Thus our natural case was the first report of such an infection in a tropical marine fish.

We do not know when the pathogens infected the fish; however, from the clinical history, we speculate that the fish became infected while being reared in the commercial fish dealer's concrete aquarium.

LITERATURE CITED

- BRUNO, D. W. 1989. Observations on a swim bladder fungal infection of farmed Atlantic salmon, *Salmo salar* L. Bulletin of the European Association of Fish Pathologists 9: 7-8.
- CHINABUT, S., C. LIMSUWAN, AND P. CHANRAT-CHAKOOL. 1990. Mycobacteriosis in the snakehead, *Channa striatus* (Fowler). Journal of Fish Diseases 13: 531-535.
- GASKINS, J. E., AND P. J. CHEUNG. 1986. *Exophiala pisciphila*. A study of its development. Mycopathologia 93: 173-184.
- GROCOTT, R. G. 1955. A stain for fungi in tissue sections and smears, using Gomori's methenamine silver nitrate technic. American Journal of Clinical Pathology 25: 975.

- HATAI, K. 1989. Fungal diseases of fish and shellfish. [In Japanese.] *Journal of Antibacterial and Antifungal Agents* 17: 43-48.
- HAWKSWORTH, D. L., B. C. SUTTON, AND G. C. AINSWORTH. 1983. Ainsworth and Bisby's dictionary of the fungi, 7th ed. Commonwealth Mycological Institute, Kew, Surrey, England, 445 pp.
- KAGEYAMA, K., AND Y. WATANABE. 1978. Manual of histologic techniques. [In Japanese.] Igaku Shoin Ltd., Tokyo, 337 pp.
- MORI, T., K. HATAI, AND S. S. KUBOTA. 1986. Histopathological findings of long-snouted butterfly fish, *Forcipiger longirostris*, naturally infected with acid-fast bacteria. [In Japanese.] *The Bulletin of the Nippon Veterinary and Zootechnical College* 35: 141-145.
- NAOE, S., AND Y. KUROIWA. 1977. Tissue phase of dematiaceous fungi. [In Japanese.] *Japanese Journal of Medical Mycology* 17: 241.
- NELSON, P. E., T. A. TOUSSOUN, AND W. F. O. MARASAS. 1983. *Fusarium* species. The Pennsylvania State University Press, University Park, Pennsylvania, 191 pp.
- OKUDAIRA, M. 1985. Detection of fungi in tissues. In *Fungi pathogenic for human and animals, Part B, Pathogenicity and detection: II*. H. Howard (ed.). Marcel Dekker, Inc., New York, New York, pp. 229-283.
- OTTE, E. 1964. Eine mykose bei einem Stachelrochen (*Trigon pastenacea* L.). *Wiener Tierärztliche Monatsschrift* 51: 171-175.
- TODARO, F., A. BERDAR, A. CAVALIERE, G. CRISEO, AND L. PERNICE. 1983. Gasophthalmus in black sea bream (*Spondyliosoma cantharus*) caused by *Sarcinomyces crustaceus*. *Linder Mycopathologia* 81: 95-97.

Received for publication 19 January 1993.