

**Pleurothallis ichthyonekys** Luer, sp. nov.

Planta parva epiphytica dense caespitosa, caulibus secundariis brevibus unifoliatis, foliis crassis spatulatis obtusis longipetiolatis, racemo longo repentis, floribus purpureis singularibus successivis, sepalo dorsali anguste triangulari tricarinato, sepalis lateralibus late ovatis semiconnatis brevicaudatis bicarinatis, petalis anguste ovatis ciliatis longicaudatis leviter clavellatis, labello rubro trilobato unguiculato, lobo antico transverse obovato rotundato plano, lobis lateralibus oblongis obtusis, disco bicarinato.

Plant small, epiphytic densely caespitose; roots numerous, fine, flexuous. Secondary stems short, terete, channeled, 5-10 mm long, unifoliate, with 1-2 thin, basal sheaths. Leaves thick, dark green, obovate-spatulate, obtuse, tridenticulate, the base long-petiolate, sulcate, 20-35 mm long, 6-9 mm wide. Inflorescence a long (to 12 cm), repent, successively flowering raceme, the peduncle filiform, flexible, descending from a node on the secondary stem; floral bract 1 mm long; pedicel 2.5-3 mm long; ovary 1.5 mm long; sepals dark red-purple, the dorsal sepal narrowly triangular, acuminate into a slender tail, 7 mm long, 1.5 mm wide, tricarinate, the lateral sepals broadly ovate, concave and connate below the middle, the apices narrowed into short (2 mm) tails, each lateral sepal bicarinate, 6.5 mm long, 3 mm wide; petals translucent white with a purple vein, narrowly ovate, with filiform, sometimes branching cilia below the middle, the apex attenuated into a slender, slightly clavellate tail, 5 mm long, 0.5 mm wide excluding the cilia; lip red, 3-lobed, the anterior lobe transversely obovate, rounded, flat, the lateral lobes below the middle, oblong, obtuse, oblique, erect, about 1 mm long, the base thickly unguiculate, narrowly sulcate, the disc with a pair of serrate, rounded calli near the middle between the apical and lateral lobes, 4.5 mm long, 3 mm across the anterior lobe, 4 mm across the lateral lobes spread out; column yellow, suffused with red, winged, 2.75 mm long, with a broad, concave foot.

ETYMOLOGY: From the Greek *ichthys*, "fish," and *nekys*, "carcass," in allusion to the fanciful resemblance of the petals to the bony skeleton of a fish.

TYPE: *ECUADOR*: ZAMORA-CHINCHIPE: epiphytic in stunted trees below the cold, wet, windswept pass east of Loja, near km 14, alt. 2800 m, 6 March 1977, C. Luer, J. Luer & K. Cordoba 1571 (HOLOTYPE: SEL).

DISTRIBUTION: Southeastern Ecuador.

This little species forms large clumps of tightly packed spatulate leaves which cling to the mossy branches of stunted host trees. The hair-like racemes creep through the moss and bear their deep purple flowers in slow succession a short distance from the plant. The sepals and petals are caudate, and the petals are ornamented with extremely fine, long cilia. The red lip is relatively large with a broad, rounded anterior lobe and long, narrow basal lobes. The ciliate petals and three-lobed lip indicate a relationship to *Pleurothallis cestrochila* Garay, found nearby at lower elevations, which may be distinguished by the black lip with short, scabrous basal lobes.

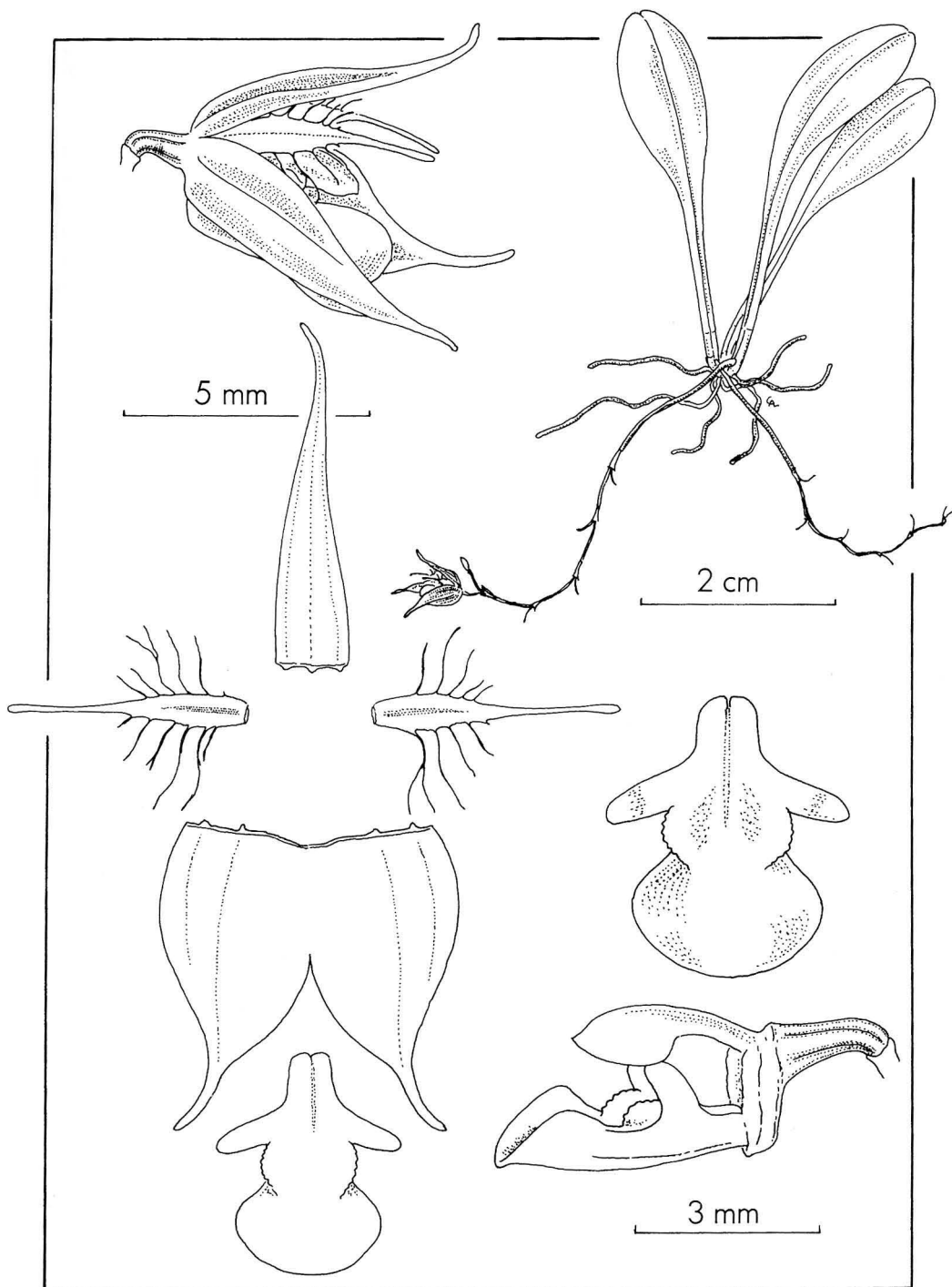


Figure 259. *PLEUROTHALLIS ICHTHYONEKYS* Luer