

***Peckoltia sabaji*, a new species from the Guyana Shield (Siluriformes: Loricariidae)**

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Abstract

Peckoltia sabaji is described based on specimens from the Guyana Shield regions of the Essequibo, Negro, and Orinoco River drainages of Guyana and Venezuela. *Peckoltia sabaji* is a member of the loricariid subfamily Hypostominae, tribe Ancistrini. The species differs from nearly all other members of the Hypostominae based on coloration — small spots on the head with spots becoming very large on the posterior part of the body. Those species with a similar coloration either do not have elongated bodies (vs. body very elongate) or have odontodes on the opercle as adults (vs. odontodes on opercle absent, rarely with one or two odontodes in adults).

Keywords: Ancistrini, *Hemiancistrus*, Hypostominae, South America, suckermouth armored catfish, Venezuela

Introduction

The Loricariidae, suckermouth-armored catfish, is the largest family of catfishes and among the largest of all fish families (Eschmeyer, 2003). New species of the Loricariidae are consistently being discovered in poorly-sampled areas of South America like the Guyana Shield. One example is the species described herein as *Peckoltia sabaji*.

Currently, *Peckoltia* is recognized in the subfamily Hypostominae, tribe Ancistrini of the Loricariidae (Armbruster, in press). It is considered a basal genus of the Ancistrini with no clear relationships to other taxa and it is likely that it may be synonymous with *Hemiancistrus*. *Peckoltia* and *Hemiancistrus* are not diagnosable from one another and neither genus is supported by synapomorphies. The placement of the species described in this paper in the vicinity of *Hemiancistrus* and *Peckoltia* is suggested by the lack of odontodes on the opercles of adults. Among the Ancistrini, opercles lack odontodes only in *Hemiancistrus*, *Panaque*, and *Peckoltia* (these odontodes are not to be confused with the hypertrophied cheek odontodes of the Ancistrini that can be everted at about a 90° angle to the