



Hypostomus rhanthos (Siluriformes: Loricariidae), a new species from southern Venezuela

JONATHAN W. ARMBRUSTER¹, LEIGH A. TANSEY² & NATHAN K. LUJAN³

¹Department of Biological Sciences, Auburn University, 331 Funchess, Auburn, AL 36849, USA: Telephone: (334) 844-9261, FAX: (334) 844-9234. E-mail: armbrjw@auburn.edu

²Franklin High School, 810 Hillsboro Road, Franklin, Tennessee 37064 USA: Telephone: 615-472-4450. E-mail: leight@wcs.edu

³Department of Biological Sciences, Auburn University, 331 Funchess, Auburn, AL 36849, USA: Telephone: (334) 844-9261, FAX: (334) 844-9234. E-mail: lujanmk@auburn.edu

Abstract

Hypostomus rhanthos is described for a uniquely pigmented species of loricariid catfish from the upper Río Orinoco of Amazonas, Venezuela. *Hypostomus rhanthos* can be separated from all other *Hypostomus* except *H. micromaculatus* by having its head and dorsal and lateral surfaces of body densely covered in very small spots (greater than 15 spots on the first plate in the dorsal series of specimens less than 100 mm SL vs. less than 10; greater than 30 spots in specimens greater than 100 mm SL vs. less than 15). The new species is distinguished from *H. micromaculatus* by having round spots (vs. longitudinally oval) that are unordered (vs. in longitudinal lines), by having well-developed keels on the lateral plates (vs. keels weak), by the presence of a ridge on the pterotic that is contiguous with the supraorbital ridge (vs. pterotic ridge absent), and by having the abdomen fully plated (vs. partially plated or naked).

Key words: Amazonas, Catfish, Hypostominae, *Hypostomus micromaculatus*, Neotropics, Siluriformes, Taxonomy

Resumen

Se describe *Hypostomus rhanthos* para una especie de loricariido con una pigmentación única de la parte alta del Río Orinoco en Amazonas, Venezuela. *Hypostomus rhanthos* se separa de todos los otros *Hypostomus* excepto *H. micromaculatus* por presentar la cabeza y las superficies dorsal y laterales del cuerpo cubiertas densamente por puntos muy pequeños (más de 15 puntos en la primera placa de la serie dorsal en especímenes con longitud estándar menor a 100 mm vs. menos de 10 puntos; más de 30 puntos en especímenes con longitud estándar mayor a 100 mm vs. menos de 15). La nueva especie se distingue de *H. micromaculatus* por presentar puntos redondeados (vs. longitudinalmente ovoides) dispuestos en desorden (vs. dispuestos en líneas longitudinales), por presentar quillas bien desarrolladas en las placas laterales (vs. quillas incipientes), por la presencia de una cresta en el pterotico que es contigua con la cresta supraorbital (vs. cresta en el pterotico ausente), y por presentar el abdomen completamente cubierto por placas (vs. parcialmente cubierto o desnudo).

Introduction

The genus *Hypostomus* has 138 species currently recognized as valid making it the largest genus in the Loricariidae (suckermouth armored catfishes; Armbruster, 2004). Few of the species are well defined, and a comprehensive review of the genus is lacking. Other than individual species descriptions, the taxonomic reviews that have been done on *Hypostomus* are limited to geographic reviews (Boeseman, 1968; Reis et al., 1990) or to small monophyletic groups such as the *H. unicolor* group (Armbruster and Page, 1996; Armbruster, 1998) and the *H. cochliodon* group (Armbruster, 2003b; Hollanda Carvalho and Weber, 2004).