



## A new species of the freshwater fish genus *Astyanax* (Ostariophysi: Characidae) from the rio Iguaçu basin, southeastern Brazil

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### Abstract

*Astyanax varzeae*, a new species of characid fish, is described from the rio da Várzea headwaters, a tributary of the upper portions of the rio Iguaçu in Paraná State, Brazil. The new species belongs to the *Astyanax scabripinnis* species complex and differs from its congeners by the presence of one or two humeral spots, maxilla with one to three (mostly two) teeth and 15 to 20 (usually 16 to 18) branched anal-fin rays.

### Resumo

*Astyanax varzeae*, uma nova espécie de caracídeo, é descrita das cabeceiras do rio da Várzea, um tributário do trecho superior do rio Iguaçu no estado do Paraná, Brasil. A nova espécie pertence ao complexo de espécies *Astyanax scabripinnis* e difere das demais espécies do gênero *Astyanax* pela presença de uma ou duas manchas umerais, maxilar com um a três (frequentemente dois) dentes e 15 a 20 (frequentemente 16 a 18) raios bifurcados na nadadeira anal.

**Key words:** Characiformes, Neotropical region, Taxonomy, *Astyanax scabripinnis*, Endemism

### Introduction

The genus *Astyanax* Baird & Girard, 1854 is diverse and widespread in freshwaters of South America, including at least 86 described species (Lima *et al.*, 2003). *Astyanax* is likely a non-monophyletic genus (Weitzman & Malabarba, 1998), and the taxonomic status of some species is not completely clear.

During field expeditions to the rio da Várzea headwaters, a tributary of the upper portions of the rio Iguaçu in Paraná State, Brazil (Fig. 1), a new characid species was collected that presents the morphological features of the *A. scabripinnis* species complex. This non-monophyletic group, proposed by Moreira-Filho & Bertollo (1991) and subsequently discussed by Bertaco & Malabarba (2001) and Bertaco & Lucena (2006), possesses an elongated body (2.6 to 3.6 body depth in SL), a reduced number of branched anal-fin ray (13 to 21), a tall head region, and body deepest over middle of pectoral fins.

In this study we describe a new species of the *A. scabripinnis* species complex, apparently endemic to the rio da Várzea headwaters. The existence of endemism among the fish species of the upper rio Iguaçu basin has been recently suggested (Abilhoa, 2004; Ingenito *et al.*, 2004; Wosiacki & Garavello, 2004; Pereira, 2005), and the knowledge of the diversity of this ichthyofauna is important to the conservation and management of this aquatic ecoregion.