



***Dario urops*, a new species of badid fish from the Western Ghats, southern India (Teleostei: Percomorpha: Badidae)**

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Abstract

Dario urops, new species, is described from a small stream of the Barapole tributary of Valapattanam River in southern Karnataka and from Wayanad District, Kerala. It can be distinguished from its congeners by the presence of a conspicuous black blotch on the caudal peduncle and a horizontal suborbital stripe, by the anterior dorsal fin lappets in males not being produced beyond fin spines, and by its vertebral count.

Key words: Taxonomy; freshwater fish; Western Ghats Sri Lanka biodiversity hotspot

Introduction

The family Badidae comprises a total of 19 described species (Kullander & Britz 2002; Geetakumari & Vishwanath 2010; Schindler & Linke 2010; Geetakumari & Kadu 2011) in two genera, *Badis* and *Dario*. Badids are small fishes distributed mainly in Nepal, northern India, Bangladesh and Myanmar, with only two species extending the range of the family into Thailand (Kullander & Britz 2002). Kullander & Britz (2002) were able only to include badids from the Mahanadi drainage and further north in their revision, although there were literature reports of badids collected in southern India (Day 1875–1878; Karmakar & Datta 1998). *Badis badis* was also recently recorded from Chennai by Knight & Rema Devi (2009). Day (1875–1878) mentioned the occurrence of *Badis dario* in the Western Ghats, a record that seems to have been overlooked since by most authors. During recent fieldwork in southern Karnataka, peninsular India, a small badid with an unusual colour pattern was collected from a small stream. During a search among Day's material housed at the Natural History Museum, London, the first author came across two lots labeled as *Badis dario* collected in 'Wynaad' (today's Wayanad district, Kerala). A closer inspection of Day's material and ours revealed that they are conspecific and represent a species new to science, which is described herein.

Materials and methods

Ten measurements and 10 counts were taken from the holotype and an additional 10 specimens of the type series following the methods outlined in Kullander & Britz (2002). Additional fin ray counts and vertebral counts were obtained from the six specimens housed at The Natural History Museum (BMNH 1870.5.2.9, 1889.2.1.3193–7). We adopted Kullander & Britz's (2002) terminology for colour pattern and cephalic lateral-line pores. Numbers in parentheses following a count indicate the frequency of that count. Proportional measurements are summarized in Table 1. Specimens are deposited in the collections of the Conservation Research Group, St. Albert's College (CRG—SAC), Kochi, Kerala, India and The Natural History Museum, London (BMNH).