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***Schistura paucireticulata*, a new loach from Tuirial River, Mizoram, India (Teleostei: Nemacheilidae)**

Y. LOKESHWOR¹, W. VISHWANATH¹ & L. KOSYGIN²

¹Department of Life Sciences, Manipur University, Canchipur-795 003, Manipur, India.

E-mail: lokeyum24@gmail.com, wvnath@gmail.com

²Zoological Survey of India, Indian Museum Complex 27, J.L. Nehru Road, Kolkata 700016, India.

E-mail: lkzi5@yahoo.com

Abstract

Schistura paucireticulata, new species, is described from the Tuirial River in Mizoram, India. It is distinguished from its congeners by a combination of characters: 8–9 brown bars on the body, bars in front of the dorsal fin divided into 2–3 small bars forming a reticulations; basicaudal bar black, dissociated; dorsal fin spotted, with 4 simple and 8½ branched rays; anal fin with 3 simple and 6 branched rays; lateral line complete; caudal fin deeply emarginated with 9+8 branched rays; well developed axillary pelvic lobe; and caudal fin with numerous black spots arranged in 3–4 bars.

Key words: New species, Barak-Surma-Meghna River system, northeast India

Introduction

Tuirial River, having a span of about 117 kilometres originates in the North Chawilung Hills in Aizawl District, Mizoram, India, and flows northward to join the Barak River in the Cachar District of Assam. There are only a few reports on the fishes of the river except those of Kar & Sen (2007), Lalramliana (2012) and Ng & Lalramliana (2012a & b), and it is perhaps the least studied river in northeast India ichthyologically. The Ganga Delta drainage formed by three river systems, viz., the Brahmaputra, the Ganga and the Barak-Surma-Meghna, harbours twenty-one species of nemacheilid loaches of the genus *Schistura* McClelland (1838). Eight species of *Schistura*, viz., *S. aizawlensis* Lalramliana, *S. chindwinica* (Tilak & Husain), *S. fasciata* Lokeshwor & Vishwanath, *S. minuta* Vishwanath & Shantakumar, *S. tigrina* Vishwanath & Nebeshwar, *S. papulifera* Kottelat, Harries & Proudlove, *S. sijuensis* (Menon), and *S. reticulofasciata* (Singh & Banarescu) are known to occur in the Barak-Surma-Meghna River system. Fish specimens collected during ichthyological surveys of the Tuirial River near Aizawl, Mizoram, included an undescribed species of *Schistura*, which is herein described as *S. paucireticulata*, new species.

Material and methods

Counts and measurements follow Kottelat (1990). Head length is the dorsal head length, which is measured from the tip of snout to posterior end of supraoccipital. Measurements were made point to point with digital calipers on the left side of the specimens to the nearest 0.1 mm. The type specimens are deposited in MUMF. One specimen (MUMF 11122, 55.6 mm SL) was dissected for study of the intestinal coil and the air bladder. Specimens in MUMF, ZSI and ZSI/ERS were used for comparison. Published information from Day (1878) and Menon (1987) for *Schistura multifasciata*, Günther (1868) for *S. beavani*, Hamilton (1822) for *S. savona*, Kottelat *et al.* (2007) for *S. papulifera*, Kottelat (1990) for *S. bella*, *S. mahnerti*, *S. poculi*, *S. tirapensis*, and *S. vincigurrae*, McClelland (1838; 1839) for *S. rupecula* and *S. zonata*, Menon (1987) for *S. himachalensis*, Lalramliana (2012) for *S. aizawlensis* and Zhu (1982) for *S. conirostris* and *S. longa*, was used in this study. Museum codes follow Kottelat (2012).