



Two new fish species of the genus *Puntius* Hamilton (Cyprinidae) from Manipur, India, with notes on *P. ticto* (Hamilton) and *P. stoliczkanus* (Day)

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Abstract

Puntius ater and *P. khugae*, two new species of fishes, each having a black longitudinal stripe on the side, are described from the Chindwin basin in Manipur, India. *Puntius ater*, which inhabits sluggish streams is distinct in having the dorsal fin edge black, the lateral line incomplete with 5–11 pored scales, 25–29 scales in the lateral row; transverse scales $\frac{1}{2}4/1/4\frac{1}{2}$; preanal scales 20; and a black blotch extending over the 19th and 20th scales of the lateral-line row at the level above the posterior end of the anal fin base. *Puntius khugae*, inhabiting comparatively faster, clear-water streams is distinct in having the dorsal fin edge plain, the lateral line incomplete with 8–11 pored scales, 28–30 scales in the lateral row; transverse scales $\frac{1}{2}5/1/4\frac{1}{2}$; preanal scales 19; and a black blotch on the 21st scale of the lateral-line row at the level above one scale behind the origin of the last anal fin ray. Morphological traits observed in *P. ticto* and *P. stoliczkanus* are given, and the status of these species is discussed.

Key words: Cypriniformes, Cyprinidae, *Puntius*, new species, Manipur

Introduction

The genus *Puntius* Hamilton is diagnosed by the following combination of characters: absence or presence of maxillary only or rostral and maxillary barbels; dorsal fin with last simple ray serrate or entire, branched rays usually 8; anal fin with last simple ray entire, branched rays usually 5; lateral line complete or incomplete, lateral-line scales 17–36 in row; cephalic cutaneous papillae minute or absent; pharyngeal teeth in 3 rows, usually 2,3,5/5,3,2; colour pattern extremely variable (Roberts, 1989). According to Kottelat (1999), *Puntius* is a catchall 'genus' in which a large number of unrelated small barbs have been placed.

Manipur, with its varying forms of water bodies harbours many species of *Puntius*. Hamilton (1822) described *Cyprinus ticto* (now *Puntius*) from the Gangetic basin. While describing *Barbus stoliczkanus* (now *Puntius*) from the Chindwin basin, Pegu and Moulmein, Day (1878) wrote that the species supersedes the distribution of *P. ticto* in the east. Hora *et al* (1937), Talwar and Jhingran (1991) and Jayaram (1991) considered *P. stoliczkanus* to be a junior synonym of *P. ticto*. Hora (1921), without giving any collection data, reported *P. ticto* to be very common in the Imphal valley. Menon (1953) recorded the species from fields near Kanglatombi and from the banks of Imphal River (Chindwin basin). Menon (1954) recorded the species from Manipur without discussing its distribution by basin.

In order to clarify the identity and distribution of *Puntius ticto* and *P. stoliczkanus*, several collections have been made from the Barak and Chindwin drainages for a detailed study. The present work reveals that two species are distinct. *Puntius ticto* is restricted to the Barak basin while *P. stoliczkanus* is restricted to the