



***Balantiocheilos ambusticauda*, a new and possibly extinct species of cyprinid fish from Indochina (Cypriniformes: Cyprinidae)**

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Abstract

Balantiocheilos ambusticauda **sp. nov.** is described from the Mekong and Chao Phraya river drainages in Indochina (mainland Southeast Asia). It can be distinguished from its only congener, *B. melanopterus*, in having a shorter snout (27.5–33.9% HL vs. 33.2–39.1), posteriorly directed grooves at rictus curved (vs. straight), and narrower black margins on the pelvic and anal fins (on distal third or less vs. on distal half or more). The possibility that *B. ambusticauda* is extinct is also discussed.

Key words: Mekong, Chao Phraya, Systomini, Osteobrama

Introduction

Cyprinid fishes of the genus *Balantiocheilos* Bleeker, 1860 (type species *Barbus melanopterus* Bleeker, 1851) are easily distinguished from other members of the family by the presence of thick and fleshy lips, the lower lip bearing a large lobe that is deeply incised medially along its posterior edge and black along the distal margins of the dorsal, caudal, anal and pelvic fins. The posterior margin of the lower lip has often been described as forming a posteriorly opening pouch or pocket between the lip and the skin of the throat (e.g., Bleeker, 1863–64: 27, 80; Weber & de Beaufort, 1916: 205; Smith, 1945: 206; Kottelat *et al.*, 1993: 29, 110). To date, the genus has been considered monotypic and found only in river drainages of Sundaic and mainland Southeast Asia (Indochina). *Balantiocheilos hekouensis* Wu, in Wu *et al.*, 1977 is a synonym of *Paraspinibarbus macracanthus* (Pellegrin & Chevey, 1936) (Chu & Kottelat, 1989).

A comparison between Indochinese and Sundaic specimens previously thought to be conspecific with *B. melanopterus* shows that two distinct species can be recognized, with the Indochinese specimens representing a new species described herein as *Balantiocheilos ambusticauda*.

Materials and methods

Measurements were made point to point with dial callipers and data recorded to 0.1 mm. Counts and measurements were made on the left side of specimens whenever possible. Subunits of the head are presented as proportions of head length (HL). Head length itself and measurements of body parts are given as proportions of