



## Description of a new cyprinid species, *Labeo meroensis* n. sp. (Teleostei: Cyprinidae), from the River Nile

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### Abstract

*Labeo meroensis*, new species, is described from the River Nile between the 6th and 5th cataract at Shendi and Atbara, Republic of Sudan. It is a small species, up to 52.5 mm standard length, resembling some species of the *Labeo parvus*-group. It is distinguished from all other African *Labeo* species by the combination of the following characters: cylindrical body, transverse plicae on the inner surface of the lips, 5.5 scale rows between lateral line and mid dorsal line, 39 to 41 scales in lateral line, 16 scales around the caudal peduncle and eye-diameter more than 21% of head-length.

**Key words:** Cypriniformes, Africa, freshwater

### Introduction

Four species of *Labeo* have been reported so far from the Nile basin, excluding Lake Victoria, i.e. *Labeo niloticus* (Forskål, 1775), *L. horie* Heckel, 1847, *L. coubie* Rüppel, 1832 and *L. forskalii* Rüppel, 1835 (Heckel, 1847; Sandon, 1950; Abu-Gideiri, 1984; Bailey, 1994). In January 2006 during an ichthyological investigation on the River Nile in the Republic of Sudan a small *Labeo* species was found, similar in general appearance to *L. ogunensis* Boulenger, 1910 from West Africa. Morphometrics and meristics, however, soon revealed differences from every *Labeo* species described until now. Herein the new species *L. meroensis* is described using meristics, morphometrics and live coloration.

### Material and methods

The description is based on specimens collected during January from the River Nile in the Republic of Sudan (see type data). The specimens are deposited in The Natural History Museum London (BMNH) and in the Africamuseum in Tervuren (MRAC). Measurements and counts follow Tshibwabwa & Teugels (1995), with supplementary measurements of body depth at the beginning of the dorsal fin. Besides materials examined within this study, I refer to measurements and counts as listed in Reid (1985) and Tshibwabwa & Teugels (1995). Additional x-rays were performed for the type series of the new species. Comparative materials examined are: *L. ansorgii* Boulenger, 1907 BMNH 1907.6.29.210, 1 specimen, Dongoena Swamps, Cuene River, Angola; *L. brachypoma* Günther, 1868 BMNH 1866.3.8.13–15, 3 specimens, Lagos, Nigeria; *L. camerunensis* Trewavas, 1974 BMNH 1973.5.14.322–323, 2 specimens, Wowe River, Mungo system, Cameroon; *L. coubie* Rüppel, 1832 BMNH 1862.6.17.132–139, 7 specimens, Nile River, Khartoum, Republic of Sudan; BMNH 2005.4.18.112–113, 1 specimen, mouth of Alibori River (Niger basin), Benin; BMNH 2006.4.17.28–