



Puntius kamalika, a new species of barb from Sri Lanka (Teleostei: Cyprinidae)

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Abstract

Since its first record from the island in 1912, the barb *Puntius amphibius* Valenciennes has regularly featured in Sri Lanka's ichthyofaunal inventories. Recent work has shown, however, that the name *P. amphibius* should be reserved for a species originally collected from Bombay, India, and described by Achille Valenciennes in 1842, now known only from its lectotype. The Sri Lankan fish hitherto known by this name is an undescribed species. *Puntius kamalika*, new species, is distinguished from all Sri Lankan and peninsular-Indian congeners by having (in addition to a suite of mensural characters) ½4/1/2½ scales in transverse line between mid-dorsal scale row and pelvic-fin origin and lacking any prominent markings on fins and body in both living and preserved examples. The new species is widely distributed in the island's wet-zone lowlands (rainfall > 2,500 mm yr⁻¹), where it occurs in streams, rivers and marshes between the Kelani-River basin draining to the island's west, and the Gin River basin to the south. It is locally common.

Key words: *Puntius amphibius*, *Puntius mahecola*, *Puntius chola*, India, Kerala

Introduction

Ever since its original description, *Puntius amphibius* (Valenciennes, in Cuvier & Valenciennes, 1842) has been regularly included in the ichthyofaunal inventories of peninsular India (e.g., Jerdon 1849; Günther 1868; Day 1865, 1878; Hora & Law 1941; Jayaram 1991; Talwar & Jingran 1991). Following Duncker's (1912) record of the species from Vakwella on the Gin River near Galle in southern Sri Lanka, it has featured also in listings of the freshwater fishes of that island (e.g., Deraniyagala 1930; Herre 1946; Mendis 1954; Munro 1955; Senanayake 1980; Pethiyagoda 1991). Pethiyagoda & Kottelat (2005a) showed that the species identified by authors since Day (1878) as *P. amphibius* in southern India was in fact *P. mahecola* (Valenciennes, in Cuvier & Valenciennes, 1844); *P. amphibius* itself is presently known only from its lectotype, collected in Bombay, India (probably the then presidency of that name, rather than the present-day city of Mumbai).

The identity of this species in Sri Lanka has been ambiguous. Duncker (1912) described it as having 23 lateral-line scales, body suffused with red in life, lacking black markings ("Keinerlei schwarze Marken"), and with an overall white coloration in alcohol. Descriptions by subsequent authors of the Sri Lankan fish assigned to *Puntius amphibius*, however, varied. Deraniyagala (1930, 1952) and Senanayake (1980), while agreeing with the general description of Duncker (1912) and counting 4½ scales in transverse line between lateral line and dorsal-fin origin, noted that the latter had an "obliquely horizontal band across its [dorsal-fin] lower half well above the bases of the fin rays". Munro (1955) concurred with this description but added a dark blotch at the base of the tail. Pethiyagoda (1991) illustrated as *P. amphibius* a fish with 5½ scales between the lateral line and origin of the dorsal fin, apparently an example of *Puntius* cf. *chola* (Hamilton, 1822).