



Ompok brevirectus, a new catfish (Teleostei: Siluridae) from Sumatra

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Abstract

Ompok brevirectus, a new species of silurid catfish is described from the short coastal rivers draining the western face of the Leuser Mountain Range and debouching into the Indian Ocean in Nangroe Aceh Darussalam province, northern Sumatra. *Ompok brevirectus* can be distinguished from *Ompok siluroides* and *O. miostomus*, the Southeast Asian congeners that it most resembles, in having an evenly convex predorsal profile (vs. with a concavity posterior to orbit) and a more prominent lower jaw that is more broadly curving. *Ompok brevirectus* additionally differs from *O. siluroides* in having the mouth rictus separated from the anterior orbital margin by a distance of one-third (vs. less than one-third) eye diameter (4.2–5.2% HL vs. 3.2–3.7) and lacking (vs. with) a distinct dark wedge-shaped spot on the base of the caudal fin. The identity of the Southeast Asian material usually identified as *O. bimaculatus* is also clarified. *Ompok bimaculatus* is restricted to the Indian subcontinent and Myanmar in this study; the Southeast Asian material previously identified as conspecific is hereby referred to either *O. siluroides* or *O. miostomus*.

Key words: Ostariophysi, Aceh, Sumatra, Southeast Asia

Introduction

Catfishes of the genus *Ompok* La Cepède, 1803, are medium-sized members of the Siluridae, usually found in lakes and large rivers throughout India and Southeast Asia. *Ompok* as currently understood, has been shown to be paraphyletic by Bornbusch (1995), and consists of four clades, viz. the *O. bimaculatus* group, the *O. leiacanthus* group, the *O. hypophthalmus* group, and the *O. eugeneiatus* group. The *Ompok bimaculatus* group is diagnosed in having a process on the posteromedial edge of the coracoid, and is the most geographically widespread among the four clades; externally, the members of this species group are distinguished by their wide gapes and the frequent presence of a dark humeral spot. The name *Ompok bimaculatus* (Bloch, 1794) has been used for a highly variable silvery or brown silurid catfish ranging from the Indian subcontinent to Southeast Asia. However, it has been shown that such 'highly variable' widely distributed species are often aggregates of distinct species (e.g. Ng & Kottelat, 2000; 2001).

During ichthyological surveys of southern Nangroe Aceh Darussalam (NAD) province in northern Sumatra, specimens of an *Ompok* species belonging to the *O. bimaculatus* group were collected. A detailed study of this material revealed them to belong to an undescribed species that is named herein as *Ompok brevirectus*, new species. As part of this study, it also became necessary to verify the identities of the Southeast Asian members of the *O. bimaculatus* group. We restrict *O. bimaculatus* to the Indian subcontinent, with the Southeast Asian members of the species group found to belong to three distinct species: *O. brevirectus* new species, *O. miostomus* (Vaillant, 1902) and *O. siluroides* La Cepède, 1803.